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Research

Internews:
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Final Report

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Executive Summary

Internews Center for Innovation and Learning (ICIL) commissioned iHub Research (Nairobi, Kenya) to conduct a 4-month study in Ghana beginning in September 2011 to understand the impact of the EPAWA SMS Helpline Network pilot project on the local human trafficking network as well as the impact of the project on the local communities involved. EPAWA, a Ghana-based NGO, together with Survivor's Connect built the SMS Helpline using mobile phones, a laptop, and easy-to-use desktop software.

This technology, which was piloted from October 2011 - January 2012, had an aim of connecting a network of professionals who can respond to human right violations in a timely manner, and allow for a timely exchange of information to relevant authorities and communities. Fieldwork research was conducted in a three-fold manner (27 potential community users, 24 monitors, and 10 stakeholders of Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence) by a local researcher over the course of 30 days from October 20, 2011 to March 06, 2012.

Key Research Findings

Technical Approach:

Despite the majority of interviewed monitors initially stating that they would prefer to report through SMS, at the end of the pilot project, more reports had been sent through the toll-free line than through SMS. This was largely attributed to technical difficulties with the mobile service provider, which prevented many users from sending SMS. Because of such technical difficulties, it is difficult to decisively state whether there is real demand from users for using an SMS-based technical approach.

Usage:

There were 21 reported cases of Domestic Violence mentioned by interviewed monitor respondents and only 5 cases of Human Trafficking reported by the interviewed monitors. The monitors interviewed understood both terms fairly well. Therefore, the higher reporting instances of DV than HT is likely because HT is harder to identify concretely compared to instances of DV. This sentiment was also reflected in several of the interviews with monitors. Findings also revealed that the most frequent response given with regards to the best part of the EPAWA system was that the system is a much faster means of sending reports. It appears therefore that usability of a technology encourages

use.

Staff Training and Knowledge Transfer:

According to an EPAWA report written in October 2011, 88% of the monitors (211 out of 240 monitors) in the entire pilot project were trained on the helpline system once (in October 2011). Many of the interviewed respondent still thought it was difficult to pinpoint acts of DV/HT, especially HT and desired more training on the kinds of cases to report.

Impact on Ghana's DV/HT Network:

There is still a limited impact on the overall network of professionals working in the Domestic Violence (DV)/Human Trafficking (HT) sector in Ghana. The data entered and processed is yet to be accessed and utilized productively by local stakeholders working in DV/HT, other than certain staff within EPAWA. Greater impact can be realized by increasing the opportunities available for other DV/HT organizations to engage substantively on the project.

Impact of the Pilot on Communities:

Despite some technical challenges faced by monitors when reporting cases of DV/HT using the EPAWA Helpline, there was an increase in overall reporting of DV/HT by monitors. This was a result of increased HT/DV awareness, as well as a more speedy mechanism to report these cases through the use of mobile technology. Many of the monitors who felt that there were cases to report did so using the EPAWA system. Monitors that did not use the system did not feel that there was any case to report or stated that they did not want to get involve in private domestic matters. It is not possible to know if HT/DV incidents in the communities decreased as a result of the technology piloted.

Scalability and Replicability:

In total, by April 2012, there had been 200 reports to the Helpline Network in 34 different categories, with 141 of these reports given the status of approved or verified by the EPAWA website administrator. It is not possible to know if these 141 reports were solved or not as this is not a measured variable in the online database. However, based on an earlier report from EPAWA on 8 February 2012, 76 verified reports had come through the EPAWA reporting system during the pilot project period. Of those reports EPAWA self-reported that only 43% of the verified reports were followed up. This could be as a result of EPAWA's limited capacity to handle all the cases coming through the Helpline. It appears that the potential for use of the helpline system is real. However, an organizational structure and collaboration strategy needs to be built up to ensure that the entire Network and not just EPAWA has the capacity to follow-up on all of the reports made.

¹ According to Ghanaian law, it is legally mandatory for all SIM cards to be registered. If they are not, then the phone number is deactivated and cannot be used to make or receive any calls or SMS. Subscribers with unregistered SIM cards can visit the shop of authorized retailers with any of the five acceptable national IDs - Voter ID, passport, NHIS, NIA or the drivers' license to register their SIM cards. If they do not, they risk deactivation.

Challenges and Recommendations

The most challenging part of using an SMS reporting system was related to the hardware aspect of the technology, i.e. the mobile phones issued for the pilot project were reported to have numerous technical hitches which included SMS downtime, phones not working, or the toll-free numbers not going through, which was frustrating to the monitors. The registration of the SIM cards was problematic¹, with about 50 per cent of the phone lines indicating non-registration and not functioning.

According to key stakeholders interviewed, there are cultural inhibitors in some communities that will prevent proper reporting of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking cases. 45 per cent of monitors thought Domestic Violence is an internal affair and should be handled by family members. Unless the case is very serious, outsiders should not get involved. Moreover, the system may have less patronage in the rural areas where some Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking cases are not seen as problems.

This shows that the project may not be sustainable if there is not a civic education component. In fact, 75 per cent of monitors themselves said that education was the best long-term solution to combating HT/DV in the communities.

For the Project to be effective and sustainable, it is recommended to EPAWA to consider the following:

- 01 EPAWA should experiment with other mobile phone network providers so as to find the most reliable network to use.
- 02 The phones provided for the pilot were faulty and proved problematic to operate. It is important to ensure the technological solution is piloted and tested prior to full-scale launch.
- 03 Establish functional links with existing similar initiatives to increase capacity for follow-up and response to reports made on the Helpline; The current three (3) full-time personnel from EPAWA is very limited and logistics are grossly inadequate, including the lack of vehicle; monitors may get discouraged from reporting if there is no response to their reports; and
- 04 Identify certain types of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking cases that the organization has the most capacity to handle and pursue to conclusion and referring other cases to other groups.

Background

Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence

Human Trafficking (HT) has presented a major human rights problem in Ghana for many years. The issue is ingrained in the community due to cultural practices that encourage different acts of Human Trafficking. Victims of Human Trafficking include children who are exploited and/or abused when they are sent to live in rural areas with relatives in accordance with local traditions. According to a recent report², an estimated 28.5 percent of Ghanaians live under the national poverty line, often pushing these individuals to seek occupational opportunities outside their communities of origin. In the quest for work many, including small children, are trafficked either out of the country or to the various fishing communities in Ghana, where they are mistreated.

Domestic Violence (DV) is also a prevalent issue in Ghana.³ Similar to Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence is also linked to traditional practices whereby men/husbands see their womenfolk as inferior and often place it upon themselves to 'discipline' their wives and women in society. This practice however has been aggravated with women and children also being subjected to various forms of sexual, psychological, and emotional abuse. The Ghanaian police have put up a special unit to combat this practice, the Domestic Violence And Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU).⁴ In spite of these efforts, there is still further need for intervention to curb or reduce incidences of domestic violence.

Half the population in Ghana has access to mobile phone services, while about three quarters of the country has mobile coverage⁵. This has led to the rise of innovative solutions to everyday issues based on mobile technology. Leveraging on this widespread use of mobile phones, EPAWA and Survivors Connect developed an SMS Helpline system to help combat these major problems of Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence in Ghana.

Project Description

Funded by a grant from the Internews Centre for Innovation and Learning, EPAWA and Survivors Connect built an SMS Helpline Network using mobile phones, a laptop, and an easy-to-use desktop software. The main aim of the SMS Helpline software was to

²http://www.epawa.org/pdfs/reports/Ghana_Human_Trafficking_Act-Report_Annexes.pdf

³<http://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1432&context=facpub>

⁴<http://www.ghanapolice.info/dvvsu/dvvsu.htm>

⁵<http://www.internews.org/global-issues/center-innovation-and-learning>

connect a network of professionals who would respond fast in a crisis, and allow the timely exchange of information to parents and communities.

EPAWA staff spent time in each of the 20 Ghanaian communities chosen for the initial pilot project where they recruited and trained 12 individuals in each community on the signs of trafficking as well as the function of the hotline. In total, 240 Community Monitors were trained in how to identify and report instances of forced labor, human trafficking or domestic violence in their community. These monitors were to send messages through the SMS hotline, or calls on the toll-free voice lines, which were received by EPAWA on their system, mapped, and responded to according to internal protocol at EPAWA Headquarters.

The project therefore entailed:

- 01 An assessment of community assets to address these issues so as to realize needs and existing gaps in providing services against the abuse;
- 02 Setting up an SMS Helpline Network to report and map instances of violence and trafficking, the locations of these occurrences so as to enable coordination of rescue and other related services;
- 03 Training EPAWA staff how to run the Helpline while simultaneously training the recruited monitors to report cases of abuse using discounted cell phones (about 14 dollars each);
- 04 The final deliverable from EPAWA was a detailed report highlighting the entire process, the challenges, and way forward for the project (Attached in the Appendix).

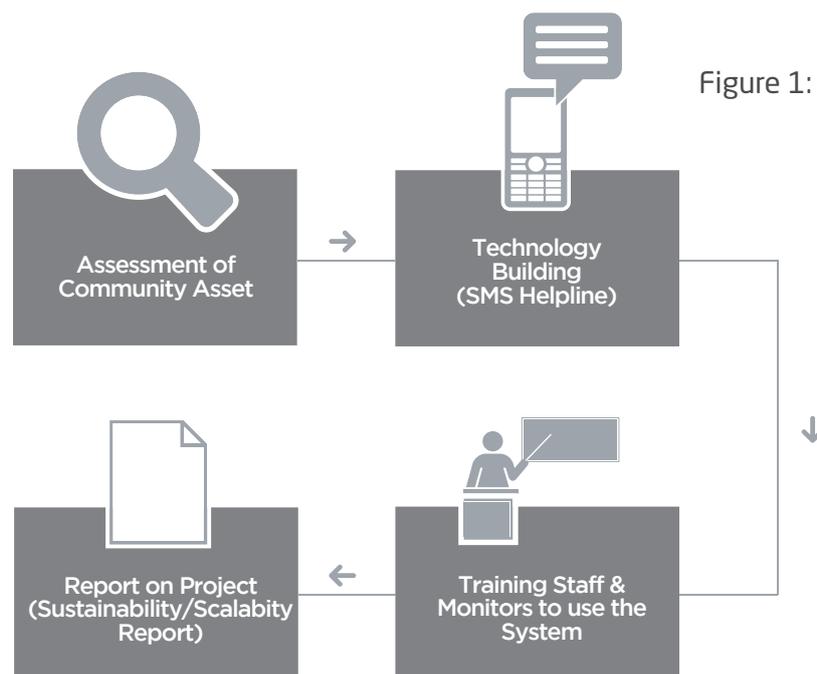


Figure 1: Project Map

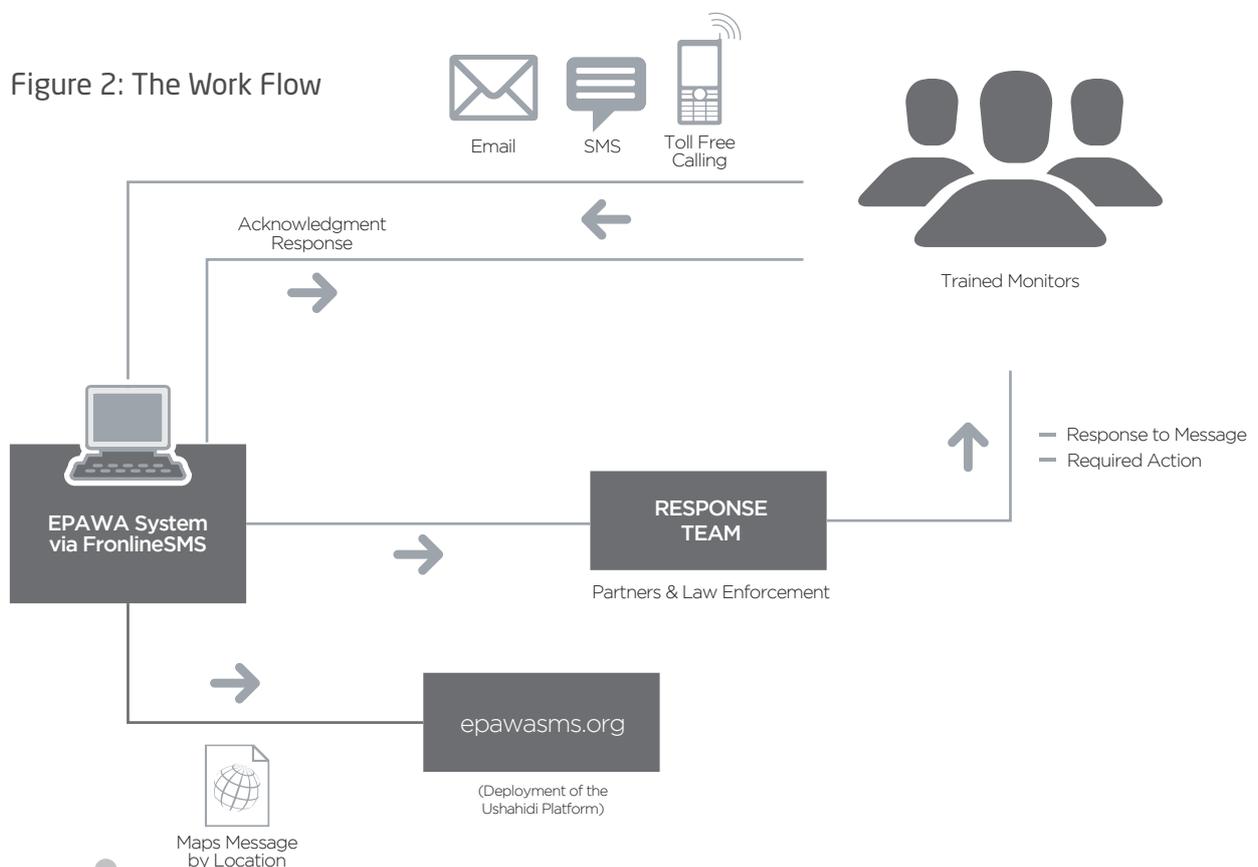
Technical Design

The main system developed in the pilot project was the SMS Helpline Network. The technology used in this pilot comprised of the following components:

- 01 Mobile phones
- 02 A laptop
- 03 A 2-way SMS communication platform
- 04 A Mapping Web-based platform (epawasms.org)
- 05 A toll-free number, email, and online reporting options, which were connected together to enable monitors to send reports to EPAWA that could easily be mapped and responded to accordingly.

The Work Flow

The 240 monitors of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking were given subsidized mobile handsets connected to the largest Ghanaian mobile telephone communication provider, MTN, which were to be used to report any cases that monitors witnessed or suspected. The reports were to be mainly in a format that included the age, gender of the victim, the location and type of the suspected violence or exploitation. These reports could be sent via the SMS platform, or by calling a toll-free number, emailing EPAWA or reporting online, all of which were included in the final technology developed. The various types of reporting broadened the available options of reporting for monitors.



Upon receipt of any SMS-based reports, the system used FrontlineSMS; an SMS-based software powered by Kiwanja.net. Frontline SMS is an easy-to-use desktop software made with grassroots organizations in mind. It needs no Internet connection, just a mobile network signal. FrontlineSMS can automatically reply to the sender as well as forward the message for automatic publishing to the mapping crowdsourcing platform powered by Ushahidi. (www.epawasms.org). The platform is also used to forward the message to the first response team, consisting of police/social service providers etc., located in each of the 20 target communities to respond on-site.

Incoming messages from the SMS platforms, via the toll free number, email and online platforms are processed based on urgency and case type, among others. The messages are investigated for validity so as to begin the follow-up process. When the messages are mapped on the EPAWA platform powered by Ushahidi, they are classified as “credible”, “approved” or “unapproved” based on further information from trusted sources and case investigators in the field. Valid reports are followed up on and some are escalated to relevant law enforcement authorities, social services, and other partners in the project (See appendix for partner organizations). External relevant stakeholders also received alerts to support investigation of incidents and were given update reports with relevant information. After cases are resolved, they are to be summarized/published on the EPAWA website.

Texts containing case reports are to be immediately deleted from the project phone used by monitor and there are instructions to the monitors to use the toll-free reporting option only during emergencies and in a very private place.



Partners

Internews



Internews is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to empower local media worldwide to give people the news and information they need, the ability to connect, and the means to make their voices heard. Based in Washington, DC and operating globally, The Internews Center for Innovation & Learning (ICIL) experiments with, captures, and shares innovative approaches to communication from around the world. The Center seeks to strike a balance between local expertise and global learning in order to develop a comprehensive approach to innovative information exchange. The success of Internews' programs springs from the expertise of its local field teams and an innovation advisor in each region helps support local experimentation, research, and learning. The Center has committed to capturing the technological discoveries of field offices to enrich the knowledge base of the international development community as a whole.

EPAWA



Ghana-based NGO, EPAWA, developed an SMS Helpline Network, a project to use Short Message Service (SMS) to connect a network of professionals who can respond in a human trafficking crisis. The local NGO, EPAWA, trained community members to report on human-trafficking and domestic violence activities in their own communities. EPAWA already had an established on-the-ground presence in Ghana and the credibility to connect relevant agencies to the network. A list of partner organizations is listed in the Appendix.

Survivor's Connect



Survivors Connect joined the project to provide guidance in software development based on their experience using similar SMS tools in Haiti and Nepal. Survivors Connect linked with EPAWA to provide technical support on the project. Survivors Connects mission is to develop and extend innovative ICTs to enhance grassroots efforts against modern-day slavery and human trafficking.

Driving local tech research in Africa, iHub Research is the research arm of iHub Nairobi, focused on conducting high quality research with an emphasis on technology and its uses in Africa. We facilitate local research capacity building and conduct local qualitative and quantitative research in East Africa, by East Africans. We bring information on technology and its uses to the technology community, enabling entrepreneurs and developers to make better decisions on what to build and how to build it.

Research Objectives

The research component of the EPAWA pilot project was designed and conducted by iHub Research under the supervision of the Internews Innovation Advisor and the Director of Research and Learning in Washington DC.

iHub Research contracted a local researcher in Ghana with the advice of Internews, and she worked under the direction of iHub Research throughout the duration of the project to provide the local background and conduct the data collection. The research project was conducted in conjunction with the pilot project, and for this reason, the coordinating researcher worked closely with the Ghanaian pilot project implementing organization, EPAWA, throughout the research period.

The research focused on the technology integration component of the project and aimed to measure its impact on the community. The research sought to answer two fundamental questions:

- 01 What is the impact of the EPAWA project on the local human trafficking network?
- 02 What is the potential future scalability and use of the EPAWA SMS Helpline?

Research Methodology

The research aimed to address specifically the following issues:

01

Extent to which the pilot (implemented by EPAWA) achieves its instrumental goal of increasing the reporting of human trafficking/domestic violence occurrences through the particular system; This can be broken down further to look specifically at:

- Usage of the reporting system via SMS/other by the local population and by the network;
- The follow-up (or lack of) to received SMS reports;
- The increase/decrease of community awareness of the trafficking and violence phenomenon;
- The integration of the piloted technology with the current reporting system (if any);
- The effectiveness (or not) of the SMS Helpline system in addressing violations and raising awareness.

02

Trust and perceived security of the system by population; This can be broken down further to look specifically at:

- The potential application of this system in other countries;
- Effectiveness in addressing technological challenges that emerged during the pilot project and recommendations for avoiding future design flaws;
- Other similar projects in Ghana or other countries and the comparative advantage/disadvantage of this specific project;
- The level of community's trust in SMS reporting;
- The level of community awareness about the system and human trafficking;
- The perceived security of the system by community members, mobilizers, and EPAWA;
- Any security issue or branch in the privacy of the victims and reporters that emerges during the project.

03

Further applications and considerations including:

- The potential application of this system in other countries;
- Effectiveness in addressing technological challenges that emerged during the pilot project and recommendations for avoiding future design flaws;
- Other similar projects in Ghana or other countries and the comparative advantage/disadvantage of this specific project;

Research Methods

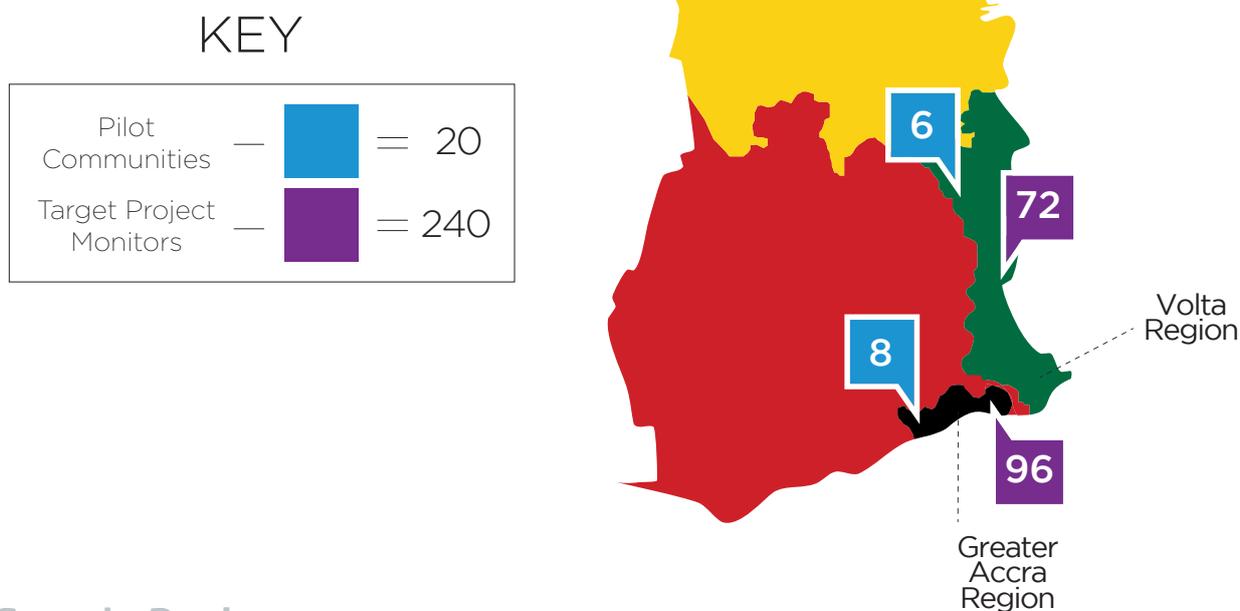
A mixed method approach was used to address the key research objectives. In-depth Interviews and the administration of structured questionnaires were the main methods used to collect research data. Fieldwork data collection was conducted in a three-fold manner by a local researcher over the course of 30 days from October 20, 2011 to March 06, 2012.

Pilot Project Targets

For the pilot project, EPAWA targeted twenty (20) communities in Ghana where Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking is most prevalent. The pilot communities were selected based on the relative poverty situation, prevalence of reported/known cases of human trafficking and EPAWA exposure to the communities through the organization's outreach activities. From these communities, 240 Monitors of human trafficking and domestic violence were selected to use the system throughout the duration of the pilot (see Table 1). The Monitors were selected by EPAWA local contacts using the following criteria:

- 01 Literate;
- 02 Over 16 years of age;
- 03 Observed level of responsibility/leadership;
- 04 Ability to utilize mobile phone;
- 05 Familiar with English (although this criterion had less weight).

Figure 3: EPAWA SMS Helpline Project Pilot Communities and Target Monitors



Sample Design

Out of the twenty (20) pilot communities, six (6) communities were selected for the research, that is, two (2) per region. In these communities, structured interviews were carried out with both monitors and perceived potential community users.

The number of Monitors and Potential Community Users for interview was determined by the practicality as dictated by the budget and time available for the baseline research. Thus, twenty-four (24) Monitors (4 from each of the 6 research communities) and thirty-six (36) Potential Community Users (6 from each of the 6 research communities) were to be interviewed. Although 36 Potential Community Users were targeted, 27 were actually recruited because of limitations of time in the field and the length of the in-depth interviews.

Data collected through structured questionnaires administered to potential community users

Data was collected from 27 potential community users of the SMS Helpline system in six (6) of the twenty (20) communities participating in the EPAWA pilot in Ghana (Greater Accra, Volta, and Northern). Sampling from each community was on the basis of people who were expected to have an intimate familiarity based on a brief recruitment screener:

- 01 Community Leader - 1 Male and 1 Female
- 02 NGO/CBO Leader - 1
- 03 Support Group Leader (Religious, School, government service agency) - 1
- 04 Regular Member (preferably one that has lived long in the community) - 2

Once the individual met the requirements (appropriate age, knowledge of the terms, etc.), a 10-minute semi-structured questionnaire was administered in the language preferred by the interviewee.

Demographics of the Potential Community Users

Of the 27 potential community users who were interviewed, 10 were female respondents and 17 were male respondents. Only 1 had attained post-graduate level of education. The majority (6) had a technical training diploma of 1-3 years. 4 had attended teacher’s training college.

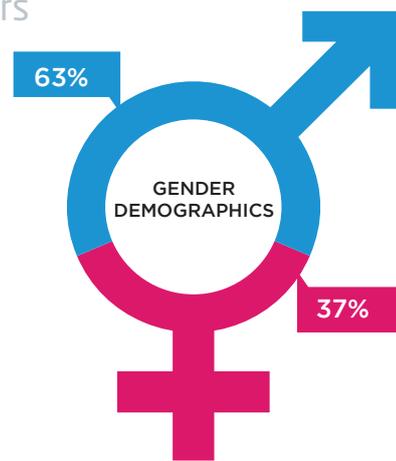


Figure 4: Gender Demographics

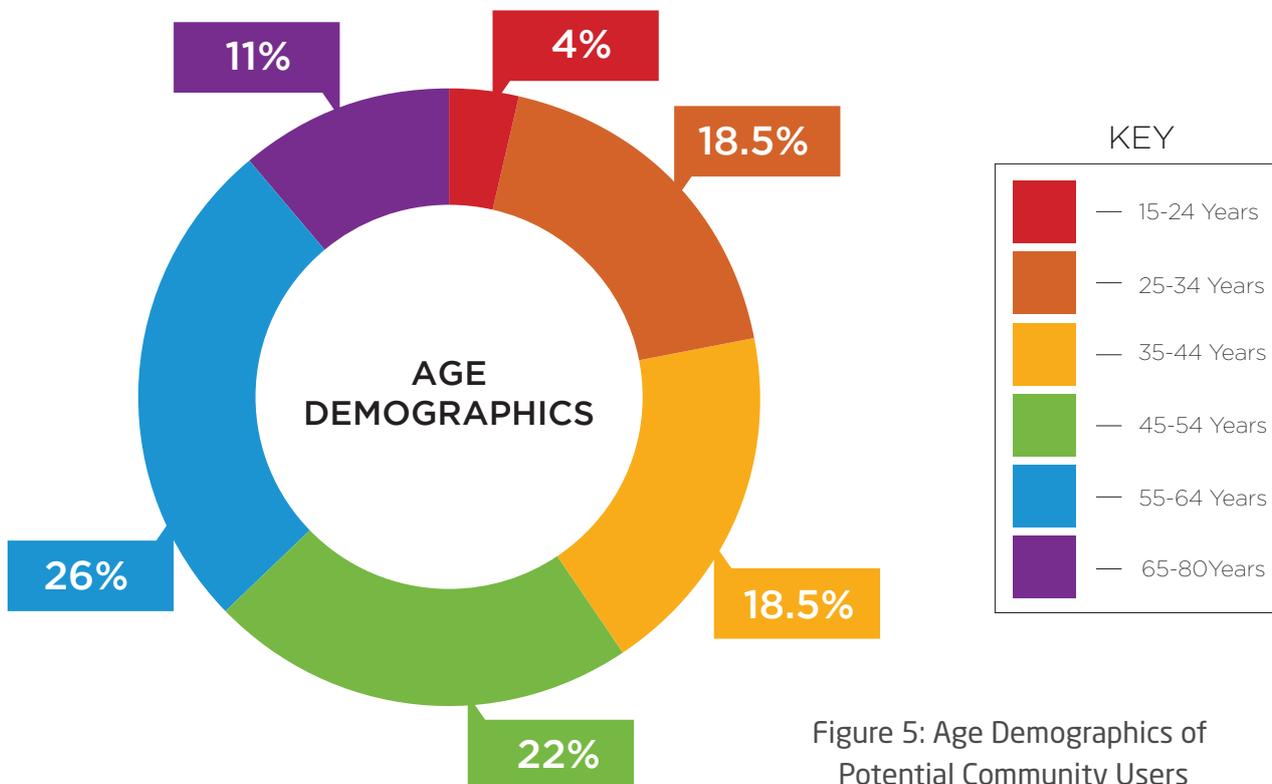


Figure 5: Age Demographics of Potential Community Users

The actual number of Potential Community Users did not match the target because of the short time allocated to their identification, making appointments and actual availability of identified community members.

Data collected prior to implementation and post-implementation of project through structured questionnaires with HT/DV Monitors

Structured questionnaires were conducted with 24 of the monitors trained by EPAWA (4 from each of the 6 field sites). The confidentiality of these monitors was of the utmost importance and interviews with the monitors were done with discretion. As such, monitors were met within the same time as the EPAWA training during the baseline. A 40-minute structured interview was conducted in the language preferred by the interviewee. Contact information of the individuals was kept in order to conduct the second, end-line interview with the same individuals again. Monitor respondents were selected based on gender-balance, leadership and social commitment potential.

There was difficulty in reaching all the original respondents in the post-implementation research survey. Four Monitor respondents (Tema Station, Greater Accra Region) from the pre-implementation survey were not reached during the post-implementation as they did not answer their phones and even after being advised by the fellow monitors, did not return the calls. However, 24 monitors were eventually reached with these four of the original monitors being replaced with other monitors from the pilot project suggested by EPAWA who fit the same criteria.

Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews with EPAWA and partners prior to implementation and post-implementation of project

Eight (8) interviews with EPAWA, and other partners were conducted at the beginning of the pilot. Ten (10) interviews were conducted at the end of the pilot. A loose discussion guide guided the 30-minute interviews. Contact information of the individual was kept in order to conduct a second interview at the end of the pilot.

Project Stakeholders consisted of those institutions expected to be part of the response network needed to address cases of gender-based domestic violence and human trafficking submitted through the EPAWA SMS Helpline System. These stakeholders were identified together with EPAWA.

However, the post-implementation interviews required substantive knowledge of the project that many of the pre-implementation stakeholders originally identified did not have. Therefore, it was decided to interview the most active collaborators in order to get the greatest feedback from the most involved stakeholders.

For example, initial respondents such as the Republic of Ghana Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs (MOWAC) Human Trafficking Unit never had interaction with the project and were not able to give much on the post-implementation survey. There was also difficulty in obtaining interview schedules and responses from some Project Stakeholders within the time frame allocated for the research.

Training Targets

According to an EPAWA report written in October 2011, 88% of the monitors (211 out of 240 monitors) in the entire pilot project were trained in October 2011. Trainings were originally meant to be conducted in September 2011 and were delayed due to technical problems with MTN (the mobile network service provider used).

Targeted Samples and Actual

Monitors	24 of 24 targeted were interviewed by iHub Research; 211 of 240 total monitors were trained by EPAWA.
Potential Community Users	27 of 36 targeted were interviewed by iHub Research
Stakeholders	8 of 10 were interviewed by iHub Research at start of pilot; 10 of 10 were interviewed at end of pilot.

Main Findings

Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking

It was necessary for monitors involved in the pilot to be aware of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking in one or more of its forms so as to report all incidences related to both practices if they witnessed them. The acts monitors and potential community users were asked about Domestic Violence included: child abuse, defilement (including incest), child neglect /abandonment, unlawful removal of child from parents or school, spousal beating, spousal psychological abuse, marital rape, harmful cultural practices (e.g. female genital mutilation), widowhood rites, early/forces marriage, and customary servitude. Monitors and potential community users were also asked about their awareness of Human Trafficking incidents, such as child trafficking, giving out of children, trafficking of adults, forced labor, debt bondage and commercial sexual exploitation.

Overall, there was an increase in general awareness of the terms or activities associated with Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence by the monitors interviewed from the pre-implementation of the pilot project to 100% of understanding by the end of the pilot project. All the monitors who were interviewed at the end of the pilot project were familiar with both Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking and the various acts that constituted such malpractices. This increase could have been as a result of the monitors engaging themselves in the training program to use the EPAWA system, which was an integral part of the project.

During the initial data collection prior to the implementation of the pilot, 88% of the monitors interviewed had known what Domestic Violence meant and were aware of several of these acts that were termed as Domestic Violence. Further, 92% of the monitors had also understood what the term Human Trafficking encompassed, in the same survey. By the time the pilot drew to a close, all 24 monitors could define Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence or at least recognize the different malpractices associated with both.

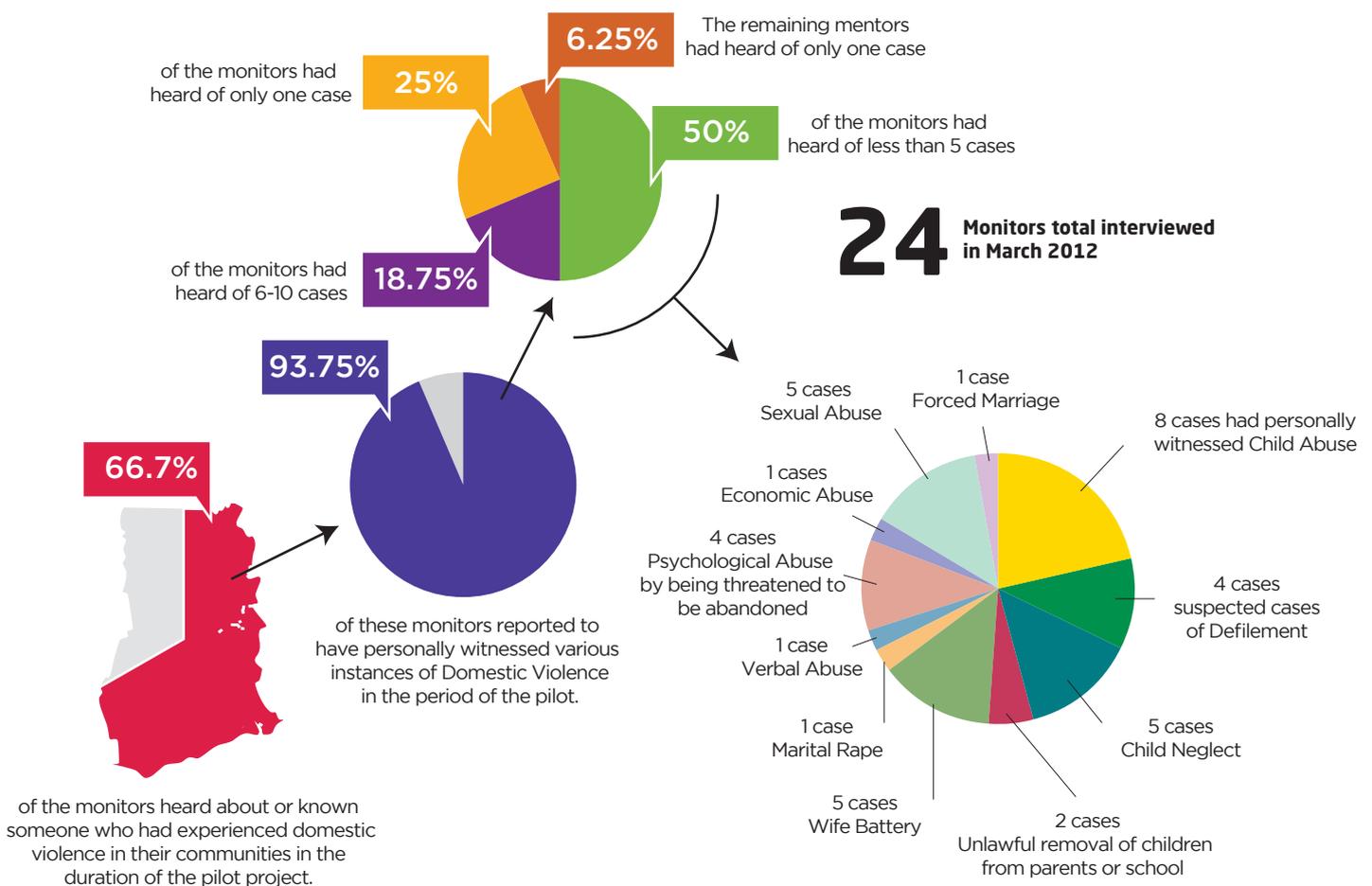
The monitors interviewed seemed to agree that Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking were prevalent problems in their communities with many of them having observed at least

least one incident in the past six months, the duration of the pilot project.

Domestic Violence

Two thirds of the monitors interviewed had heard about or known someone who had experienced domestic violence in their communities in the duration of the pilot project. 94% of these monitors reported to have personally witnessed various instances of Domestic Violence in the period of the pilot.

Figure 6: Domestic Violence Incidents Experienced During the Pilot Period



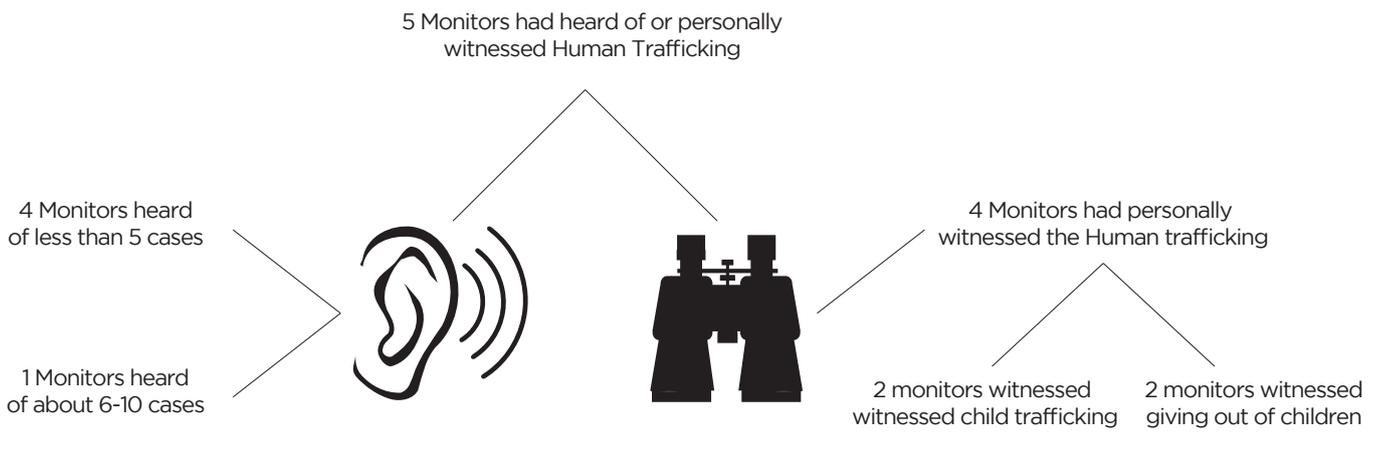
Human Trafficking

A fewer number of monitors (21%) however, had heard of or personally witnessed Human Trafficking. During both data collection instances, most respondents observed that Human Trafficking was most prevalent in the festival seasons when relatives came visiting.

Two monitors interviewed however, believed that their interventions during the pilot project had helped reduce/solve issues of Human Trafficking:

“Since the first research interview in October 2011 where I reported a case of boys sent out to another community to fish, these boys have been returned to our community, although their parents have no means to send them to school.”





THE REMAINING
20 MONITORS
 HAD NOT
 WITNESSED
 these cases in the duration
 of the pilot project

Figure 7: Human Trafficking witnessed in the period of the pilot
 Interviewed in March 2012

As depicted above, a number of monitors had personally witnessed HT or DV. Nevertheless, 83% had not personally witnessed any DV/HT cases throughout the duration of the pilot project. One monitor mentioned that it was because it was difficult to actually witness the HT:

“One will never know the situation, especially with children taken out of the villages, unless we travel with them to the fishing communities”

Increase of Domestic Violence Cases Reported

Prior to the pilot implementation, 75% of monitors had never reported any cases of Domestic Violence, while 25% of all monitors interviewed had reported between 1-5 times each. Most of these reports had been to the local police department.

Over the course of the pilot project, there was a 50% increase in reports from monitors about Domestic Violence. The reporting was done through the EPAWA SMS system, as well as other means (toll-free calling, email and online platforms) available to them. Nine (9) monitors reported that they called someone and five (5) of monitors summoned the parties involved and talked to them while one (1) monitor also reported the matter to the police. The decrease in reporting to police may have been a result of the increase in alternative parties to whom to report.

According to an EPAWA report written in October 2011, 88% of the monitors (211 out of 240 monitors) in the entire pilot project were trained in October 2011. Trainings had been delayed due to technical problems with MTN (the mobile network service provider used).

used by the system).⁶

During the data collection at the completion of the pilot project, 15 monitors interviewed had personally witnessed Domestic Violence occurring. 80% of those who personally witnessed DV had intervened in one way or another by reporting at least 21 different cases between them:

- 01 Of the 6 monitors who observed child abuse, 5 responded by calling someone, specifically, EPAWA. 2 of these who called someone claimed that they did not receive any feedback. One monitor talked to the parties involved and one reported the matter to the chief.
- 02 3 monitors witnessed cases of child neglect. One of these monitors who witnessed child neglect called EPAWA, using their personal line because the line given in the pilot was not working. One reported to social welfare and one summoned the parties involved to try and resolve the issue.
- 03 Two monitors witnessed cases of defilement with one monitor going over to the family to confirm the incident and the other calling someone, though he didn't specify whom.
- 04 Of the 5 monitors who witnessed cases of rape and sexual abuse, two managed to report through the EPAWA system, using their own phones, as the one provided for the pilot wasn't working. One monitor told someone (they didn't specify whom) while 2 monitors did nothing to intervene.
- 05 Finally, there were 2 cases of forced marriages witnessed by the same monitor and both were reported to EPAWA, while 3 cases of wife battery where action was taken by summoning the parties and talking to them.

83% of the monitors interviewed had never reported any cases of Human Trafficking in the baseline study with one monitor remarking that were he to report, the police would attack him as a suspect instead of investigating the case. The four (4) monitors who had reported suspected incidents of Human Trafficking did so about 1-5 times each to either a local supporting NGO or to their local police department.

There did not seem to be a remarkable increase in reported cases of HT at the end of the pilot project, as only four (4) respondents reported witnessing 5 different suspected instances of Human Trafficking:

- 01 2 monitors who witnessed giving out of children talked to the relatives who had gone with the children to treat them properly;
- 02 1 monitor didn't have enough information on the actual incident of human trafficking he witnessed therefore did nothing;

⁶ SMS Project to Combat Human Trafficking: Kita Hude Yee, October 2011 Report by EPAWA.

03 1 monitor didn't have enough information on the actual incident of human trafficking he witnessed therefore did nothing;

Table 1: Reported Domestic Violence Cases

EPAWA Helpline	5 Monitors	Child Abuse
	1 Monitor	Child Neglect
	2 Monitors	Defilement, Rape, Sexual Abuse
	1 Monitor	Forced Marriages
Talked to Involved Parties	2 Monitors	Child Abuse
	1 Monitor	Defilement, Rape, Sexual Abuse
	1 Monitor	Child Neglect
	3 Monitors	Wife Battery
Reported to Social Welfare		Child Neglect
Called Someone	2 Monitors	Child Abuse
Did Nothing	2 Monitors	Defilement, Rape, Sexual Abuse

Table 2: Reported Human Trafficking Cases

Talked to Parties involved	5 Monitors	Giving out of Children
EPAWA Helpline	2 Monitors	Child Trafficking
Did Nothing	1 Monitor	Not Enough Information

During the data collection at the completion of the pilot project, 63% of monitors had personally witnessed Domestic Violence occurring, 50% had intervened in one way or another by reporting at least 21 different cases between them:

Usage of New Reporting System

Higher Reporting of Domestic Violence cases

There were 21 reported cases of Domestic Violence mentioned by interviewed monitor respondents and only 5 cases of Human Trafficking reported by the interviewed monitors. Our research has shown that, as described above, the community understands both terms fairly well. The higher reporting instances of DV than HT is therefore likely because HT is harder to identify concretely compared to instances of DV. This sentiment was also reflected in several of the interviews with monitors.

Almost half of the reported cases of Domestic Violence mentioned by the monitor respondents were reported using the EPAWA system, while 40% of cases reported of Human Trafficking were through the EPAWA system. Specifically, 42% of the monitors interviewed at the end of the pilot project, had used the EPAWA SMS Helpline system to report violations. This is a considerable increase from the pre-implementation survey where only 4% had ever used an SMS helpline to report a violation.

Approximately half of the monitors who had not reported a case using the system did not believe there was a case to report. Additionally, one monitor had lost/misplaced her phone, one said her phone was not working and the third did not have an opportunity to use the system as she had been hospitalized.

Of the monitors that had used the helpline system, 80% had done so 2-5 times with the remaining 20% of monitors stating they had used the system just once, primarily because they did not have any other case to report.

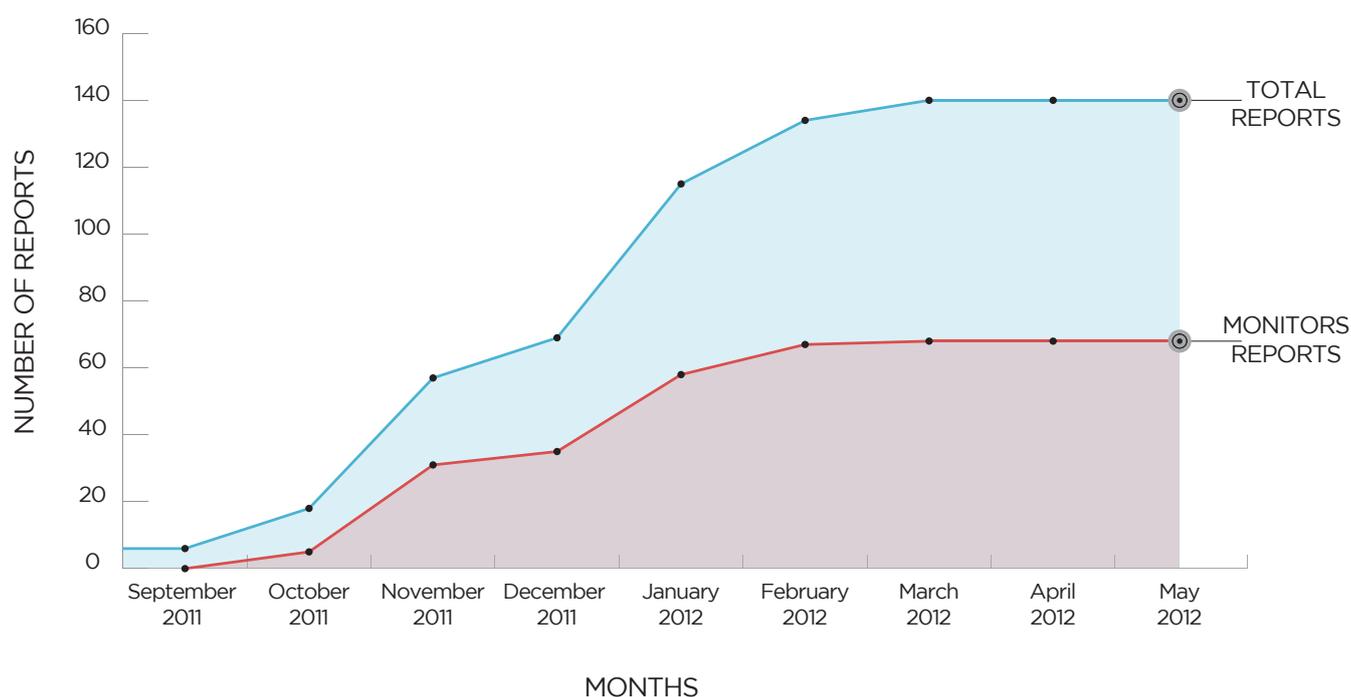
Increased Follow-Up of Reported Cases

The stakeholder organizations interviewed reported an increased follow-up of reported cases, as there were more cases reported because of the EPAWA system. The stakeholders felt that the EPAWA system has enhanced their capabilities. In particular, there was one stakeholder who stated that a defilement case that took place over a year ago was revived by EPAWA after a report was submitted to the organization.

According to the EPAWA - Ushahidi crowd-sourced website, there was a cumulative increase of the cases reported specifically by the monitors as shown in the figure below. Based on the EPAWA-Ushahidi website dashboard, over the duration of the pilot (15

September 2011 through 31 January 2012), 85% of all reports were verified by EPAWA and 57% of all reports were approved by EPAWA. At the time of writing in May 2012, 200 reports in total had been sent in through the EPAWA Helpline System and 70% had been approved. If the information in the report makes sense, the EPAWA admin marks the report as approved. If the EPAWA admin has direct knowledge about the event and can be sure that it is true, she marks the report as verified.

Figure 8: Cumulative Verified and/or approved reports (Source: epawasms.org)



The months of November 2011 and January 2012 had a spike in the number of reports coming in from the community monitors and other users of the Helpline. This could be attributed to the fact that users were newly trained to use the system in November and therefore actively reported violations through the Helpline, while in January, the users had just resumed to their usual day-to-day activities after the December Christmas break. In recent months (April/May 2012), there have been no further reports coming in through the EPAWA reporting system. It is unclear why monitors have stopped reporting.

Increase in Velocity of Reporting System

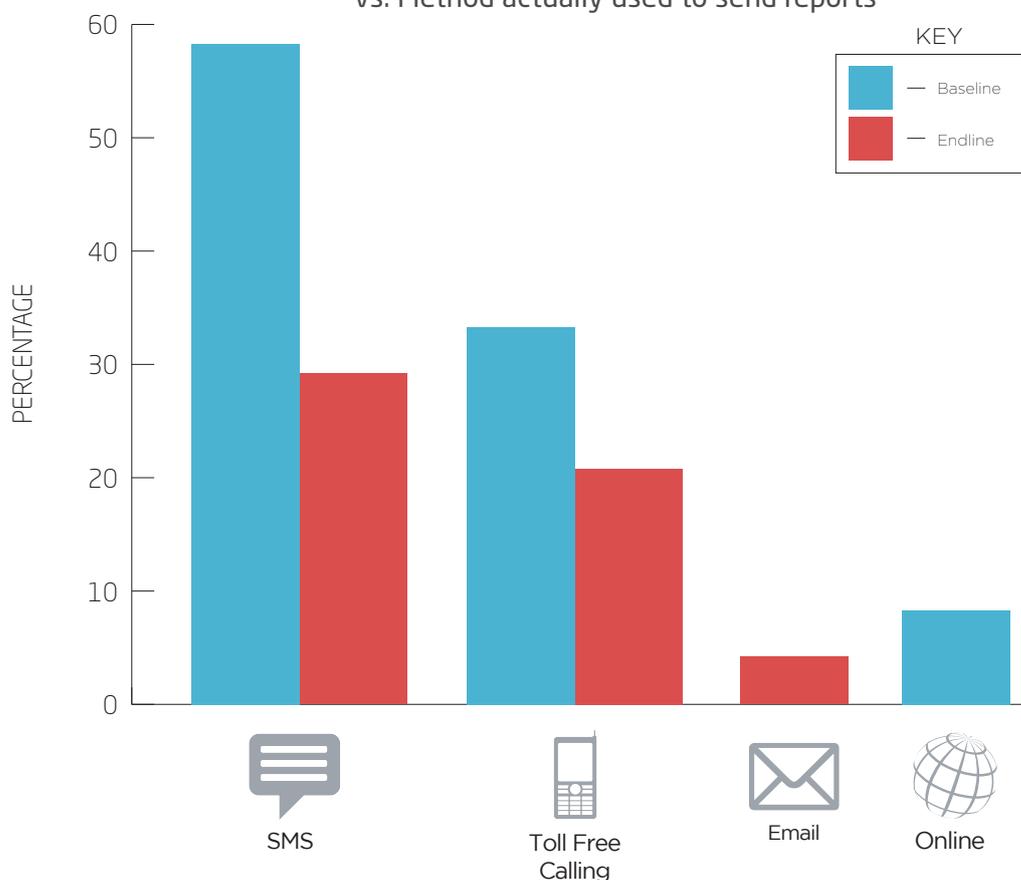
The most frequent response given with regards to the best part of the EPAWA system was that the system is a much faster means of sending reports as compared to physical reporting where one had to travel to the police station or to an NGO to report instances of the Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence. It appears therefore that usability of a technology encourages use.

In the data collected prior to the implementation of the project, many monitors had believed that the SMS Helpline’s potential lay in the fact that it would ease and make faster reporting of violations to relevant authorities. 70% of the monitors who used the system actually said that they preferred reporting Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence cases using the EPAWA system because it was faster to send a report. One monitor preferred using the system because it was easier than going to a physical location to report the cases. Two (2) monitors found the Helpline System more reliable than any other method, while one monitor preferred using the system due to its anonymity. A respondent who found the system reliable stated it was due to the quick response he received from EPAWA.

Preference of SMS Reporting System by Monitors

At the beginning of the pilot project, 58% of the monitors interviewed stated that they would most likely use SMS. This number differed from actual usage with only half of that number using the SMS system by the time the post-implementation data was collected. While no one thought it likely to use email in the baseline, one monitor used this method to send a report.

Figure 9: Method monitors preferred to send reports vs. Method actually used to send reports



The most preferred method of reporting, as stated by monitors during the interviews, was sending SMS followed by toll-free calling. 70% of users had sent reports using SMS, 50% of monitors had used Toll-free calling and 10% of monitors had sent a report via email. At the end of the pilot, when asked how many times monitors had reported using the EPAWA SMS system, 40% of monitors had used SMS only once time, only one (1) monitor had used SMS 5 times. Of the 2 monitors that used toll-free calling, one did so twice and the other reported 3 times. The email report was only used once. At the end of the pilot, the monitors cited the following reasons for their preferred method of reporting:

Table 3: Reasons for sending reports using each method

	Easy to Use	Cheaper	Faster to Use	Quick Response	Safer
SMS	2	-	3	2	2
Toll-Free	1	-	4	3	-
E-Mail	-	-	-	1	-

Perceived Security in Reporting

Many of the stakeholders flagged security concerns as one of the major reasons why local communities tend to shy away from projects like the EPAWA Helpline system. An interview conducted with EPAWA prior to the implementation of the helpline revealed that they had taken security concerns into account:

Some stakeholders claimed that confidentiality for those reporting cases was one of the most attractive aspects of the system and that it was interesting that they could map the data collection without revealing information of reporter and still generate insight from the patterns and dynamics of the various cases that would be reported and pursued.

“Security has been considered in the mobilization of monitors and the project approach was designed to protect them. For one, Monitors are not to be identified for their selected role within the community. Their role is merely to report to EPAWA any observed (cases)... They are prohibited to conduct any further investigation on any case.”

92% of the monitors had never experienced any breach in security while reporting cases or when they interacted directly with EPAWA thus the monitors perceived the EPAWA system to be a more secure method than the traditional means of reporting Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking. Almost all monitors trusted the EPAWA SMS helpline, citing various reasons for this trust:

- 01 Two (2) of monitors believed that reporting Domestic Violence cases using EPAWA offered more security because of its anonymity.
- 02 Three (3) trusted the community and officers trusted by EPAWA to combat these violations based on past working relationships.
- 03 Four (4) of monitors had used the system before and received responses and also thought it was a good and safe method.
- 04 One monitor liked the fact that the system presented many options for reporting.

Two (2) monitors could not give any reasons for trusting the system, as they were yet to use it due to technical challenges regarding the phones they were given for the pilot. A monitor said that he/she experienced a breach where a girl in a forced marriage shared her experience with the family and hinted to her family that the monitor was involved in assisting her. However, the monitor still continued to trust the EPAWA system.

Survivor's Connect, on the contrary expressed, some concerns over security on the project. They did not think the matter of security was taken into account and given the appropriate attention, given the gravity of a security breach in such a project.

This will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.



"Normally, security concerns are discussed in great deal during the strategic/program planning process. We have done this well with several of our other project partners, but this did not happen as well with the EPAWA project."

Appropriateness of the System

All interviewed monitors believed that the EPAWA SMS helpline is an effective method in reporting and addressing violations that occur within the community.

A third of interviewed monitors were positive that the community would use the system to report violations. Six (6) monitors however, did not think that the community is ready to use the system to report violations. One monitor said:



"I believe that the community members would fear harassment from other community members."



Four other monitors added that the main concern for community members would be that they would have to live with the same people that they have reported which makes it difficult and that families would not be ready to expose internal issues so as to protect their privacy of their families and the pride of the community.

Some stakeholders believed that the SMS option caters to a certain demographic, specifically the younger sector. Older people may be finding it harder to text. Some monitors found it hard to use texting so they preferred to call toll-free. However, there was no information to actually know whether these are the younger or older monitors. Younger people demonstrated through the questionnaires that they would tend to use online tools more than older monitors (although from the data collected, there were only two cases of online use).

Challenges

Technology Challenges

The most challenging part of using an SMS reporting system was related to the hardware aspect of the technology, i.e. the mobile phones issued for the pilot project were reported to have a numerous technical issues. Four (4) monitors complained of poor network service as a hindrance to their using the Helpline while others complained of receiving faulty phones. Two (2) monitors complained that they were faced with the problem of short battery life, which forced them to charge their phones frequently. Only one monitor complained of issues sending messages to EPAWA because the screen was too small. One monitor had forgotten that there was the alternative of the toll-free line.

75% of the monitors encountered various problems with regards to the actual usage of the EPAWA system. The technology issues experienced by users of the EPAWA Reporting system included SMS downtime, phones not working, or the toll-free numbers not going through, which was frustrating to the monitors. Four (4) of the monitors that attempted to use the toll-free calling to report cases said that the toll-free number was not working on several instances. A monitor said that he/she just couldn't figure out how SMS worked, which could be a result of lack of technical know how on how to operate make use of the Helpline, even after the training program.

Two (2) monitors who used SMS to report were disappointed when they did not receive an automated response from EPAWA acknowledging receipt of the SMS report. **“**

“My phone has not worked so I had to resort to partnering with other Monitors to send the reports...”

One particular monitor wanted to report to EPAWA but his phone was not working and had been taken for repairs. He therefore chose to intervene himself. Only three (3) monitors of the 24 interviewed did not experience any technical issues when reporting to EPAWA.

46% of the monitors said that their SMSs did not go through when they wanted to report a case. One monitor stated that his SIM card was unregistered and was therefore not able to report, while others lost their phones, which hindered them from sending reports. 21% of monitors said that sending SMS to report cases was not cheap, which made it difficult to send SMS reports.

All monitors that experienced problems using the EPAWA system said that the issue was not resolved even after having reported their issues to EPAWA. Said one monitor:

“(These) problems were reported to EPAWA who came back in January 2012, but to date there has been no solution.”

Due to these technical implementation issues, most of the Domestic Violence/Human Trafficking reports from monitors ended up coming through the toll-free line according to one technical field report by EPAWA.

According to Ghanaian law, it is legally mandatory for all SIM cards to be registered. If they are not, then the phone number is deactivated and cannot be used to make or receive any calls or SMS. Subscribers with unregistered SIM cards can visit the shop of authorized retailers with any of the five acceptable national IDs - Voter ID, passport, NHIS, NIA or the drivers' license to register their SIM cards. If they do not, they risk deactivation. During this pilot project, the registration of SIM cards was problematic, with about 50% of the project phone lines indicating non-registration and not functioning. This occurred even after EPAWA had gone through the initial process of registration with the service provider. EPAWA provided the Monitors back-up lines such as the EPAWA line, staff line, and the field workers line so that Monitors could reach someone at EPAWA. (Note: This alternative information would have not reached all of the Monitors because there was no avenue to gather all of them together after the initial training).

Cultural And Social Barriers As Related To Domestic Violence And Human Trafficking

Various cultural and social beliefs proved to be a barrier to the implementation of the project as these were influencing factors on whether a monitor would report or not, to the EPAWA Helpline. According to key stakeholders interviewed, there are cultural

inhibitions in some communities that will prevent proper reporting of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking cases. The system may have less patronage in the rural areas where some Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking cases are not seen as problems. Monitors in these areas will be seen as causing trouble and may not be able to operate freely.

Many of the cases by monitors that were not reported were as a result of the monitors' personal perception of the cases' gravity. The respondent monitors who did not report to EPAWA either stated that they wanted to talk personally to the parties involved or they did not believe the Domestic Violence case witnessed was serious enough to be forwarded to an external party. Another monitor was afraid to report and stated the following:



"I am afraid of embarrassing myself in front of EPAWA [because I didn't have all the facts]."

There were three (3) monitors that witnessed Domestic Violence cases and did nothing. Probed further as to why they did not report, one monitor said that the parties involved were migrants and so did not see any need to do so.

Based on the interviews, many of the monitors had a general awareness of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking. There are still a number, nevertheless, even among the potential community monitors, who may not report these cases due to certain personal views on the subject matters and conflict resolution. Almost half of the monitors thought Domestic Violence is an internal affair and should be handled by family members and unless the case is very serious, outsiders should not get involved. One monitor was unsure whether or not Domestic Violence case should be handled in-house or by outsiders. Many of those interviewed preferred that issues arising be kept and solved within the family and the community

An Assemblyman trained as Monitor for the Northern Region declared that he personally attended to five (5) cases of domestic violence that had been reported to the police:



"I am confident that community leadership can solve these cases."

This aligned with various responses obtained by potential community users who were of the opinion that the community and its leaders could be empowered, through an efficient



support system to sufficiently handle these cases within. Others had said education to parents and community on the possible consequences of their actions would go a long way in solving Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence.

As stated earlier, some respondents thought it was difficult to pinpoint acts of DV/HT, especially Human Trafficking, unless there was a personal relationship with the victims or perpetrators. This is part of the reason why there were such few cases of Human Trafficking reported as compared to the more easily identifiable Domestic Violence scenarios. This situation may require further awareness-raising inputs from EPAWA. A stakeholder felt although the number of reported cases has increased due to EPAWA, more needs to be done to create awareness to the community members and monitors. He felt that there should be regular follow-up meetings to help to create this kind of awareness on indicators to use to identify such HT/DV scenarios.

Security

Security of monitors

As stated earlier, the perceived security of the technology is very important to maintain in order to have local community report using the technology. The inability of the users to maintain their anonymity and going ahead to share cases with other community members can generate conflict within families and even communities at large, especially where perpetrators of cases happen to be key community leaders such as traditional chiefs, assembly persons, queen mothers, among others. That said, of the monitors who participated in the research study, 92% stated that they had not had any breach of security. Only one monitor stated an explicit breach of anonymity when a girl in a forced marriage shared her experience with the family and hinted to her family that the monitor was involved in assisting her.

Capacity and Sustainability

Networks/communication/collaborations

One concern, which arose during the pilot project, outside of the study scope, was the capacity of the implementing organization, EPAWA, as well as EPAWA's collaborations and interactions with other NGOs within Ghana's HT/DV Network. Despite being outside the study scope, the capacity of the implementing organization is imperatively linked with the success of the pilot project and the potential for future success. Thus, based on some of the stakeholders' responses and self-evaluation from EPAWA, we note the following challenges faced by the implementing organization that may impede their ability to scale the project.

During interviews prior to the implementation of the pilot project, Project Stakeholders (including those who attended the Stakeholders' Forum) expressed optimism over the impact of the EPAWA Helpline initiative, particularly on the reporting trend. There was a general view, nevertheless, that the increase in reporting would not be met by an equally swift and effective response system. This fear seems to have been confirmed by the time of the post-implementation interviews, with EPAWA stating that they had their hands full just trying to follow up on all of the reports. EPAWA human resources were severally overstretched, often requiring 7 day a week - 18-hour workdays. It seems that support from other organizations, especially perhaps the Government of Ghana (GOG) is needed for the follow-up strategy to the reporting of Human Trafficking/Domestic Violence. EPAWA's experience from this pilot project reflects their limited capacity and this is one major challenge to scaling this project up further.

Moreover, other stakeholders interviewed at the end of the project stated that the system had presented them with the problem of an increased burden of caseload. One stakeholder felt that even though EPAWA has enabled more cases to be reported, this has weighed down the caseload on their existing resources and the social workers are now handling a very large number of cases while relying on very limited resources. This was cited as a major challenge by many of the stakeholders who may wish to pursue a case further, but not able to due to limited budgetary allocations.

Management of the network and collaboration

Lack of true collaboration with stakeholders, especially in the planning processes

Pilot Project

The pilot project was limited by the lack of delegation and proper communication from the head of EPAWA. According to interviews held with one of the stakeholders, Survivor's Connect, they were under impression that the partnership to build the Helpline would be sustained, i.e. the two organizations would work together implement the program and agreed upon technical design, as described in the initial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by both organizations. However, Survivor's Connect became seen as only a technical partner key to the initial groundwork. Once the initial system was developed, Survivor's Connect felt like they were left out of the strategy and implementation process and the rest of the pilot project. Lack of communication between Survivor's Connect and EPAWA also impeded Survivor's Connect's ability to maintain the system they developed and respond to technical support needs.

There was no formal training for the whole staff of EPAWA; Survivor's Connect only trained two staff. EPAWA said it this was necessary due to security concerns that would

arise if everyone in the office knew how to operate the system. It was therefore overwhelming trying to work system and respond to reported cases. This prevented other actors (both internally within EPAWA and externally) to become full-scale collaborators on the project and eventually restrained the potential of this project from being fully expressed.

There was a reported inadequate knowledge of frontline agencies on legal procedures by the stakeholders who stated that it made it difficult to punish perpetrators and follow up violation cases because of improper procedures used by officials and cases not going through proper channels.

Outcomes

Follow-Up on Reported Cases

In total, by May 2012, there were 200 reports to the EPAWA Helpline Network in 34 different categories, with 70% of these reports being given the status approved or verified. Based on an earlier report from EPAWA on 8 February 2012, 76 Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence cases had been reported from various regions across Ghana. The majority of the cases (29 cases) involved various forms of child abuse ranging from child neglect (9 cases) to child trafficking for labor (4 cases). There were 7 cases reported of forced child labor.

Of the cases reported to EPAWA, 7 cases involved Defilement/Sexual assault/Rape. Five (5) cases reported involved forced marriages. At least 10 cases involved trafficking for labour. Eight (8) were domestic violence cases.

Of the total reported cases, the Police and DOVVSU were actively investigating nine (9) of these. A further nine (9) cases were being investigated by unnamed authorities. Six (6) of the cases were being handled by various NGO's such as NAPTIP and FADA. In total, 33 of the cases had been followed up in some way. Twenty-seven (27) cases still needed to be followed up at the time of the report (8th February 2012).

	Don't Know	Not Available	No	Yes
Grand Total	10	6	27	33

EPAWA has created files for and during the pilot case has worked on and continues to work on 66 real cases. Some of the cases reported were not real cases after further investigation or did not fit the scope of the cases EPAWA covers.

Some of the interviewed monitors who had reported child abuse and domestic violence cases followed up with EPAWA to verify whether or not any action was taken. One monitor later confirmed that a young girl who was undergoing abuse was removed from the abusive environment and enrolled in school in a different town. Two other monitors stated that the issues persisted:

“The wife (who was beaten) is back in their home.”

Another monitor said that she learned that Social Welfare office had taken up the case she reported. Another monitor reported that a perpetrator of domestic violence was in the police holding cells awaiting a court hearing.

Overall, the stakeholders found EPAWA system extremely useful. In particular one respondent from DSW cited that:

In the words of another stakeholder, “EPAWA’s response and approach is effective, using close and consistent follow-up—at times, even pushing—of the cases with all stakeholders including families, communities, and frontline agencies.”

“The system helps DSW to follow up cases. DSW has also found EPAWA useful because they are able to update their records and has increased engagement between stakeholders and the community.”

Proposed Solutions by the Monitors to Stop or Reduce DV/HT in the Community

Although 42% of the monitors believed that more reporting of Domestic Violence cases could help in reducing the number of incidents occurring in the community, an even greater number (71%) believed the only real and lasting solution is educating the community about Domestic Violence and its effects. This was similar to results obtained in the baseline where a similarly large portion of the monitors believed that educating the community on consequences of such activities would be most important to address this issue of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking.

Table 3: Proposed Solutions by community to address Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking

	Domestic Violence	Human Trafficking
Stronger police force	3	5
Government policy	3	4
Community involvement and monitoring	3	3
More reporting of domestic violence	9	6
Greater punishments for domestic violence	4	2
Education - more information about DV/HT and its effects	18	17
Greater involvement of NGOs/CBOs	2	1
Improved standards of living	8	7

Potential Future Use of the Helpline

All monitors said that they would want to continue to be monitors for varying reasons. 8% of monitors however had reservations about continuing to be monitors as they believed that most violations especially those involving DV should be settled internally without external intervention.

50% of monitors stated that they would want to continue monitoring in order to help the community. Monitors were keen to see perpetrators punished for their violations, to save more lives, and to make other people aware that some violations such as child abuse are not good. One monitor stated that even though he would like to continue to be a monitor, there should be a monetary compensation to keep them motivated.

Conclusions

It appears that the technology as a whole was secondary to the physical effort of EPAWA persisting in pushing each case forward. The inconsistent availability of the SMS and toll-free functions, a technical implementation issue on the side of the mobile service provider (MTN), disappointed many of the monitors. The use of the data entered and processed by the computer software also seems yet to be accessed and utilized productively by local stakeholders other than certain staff within EPAWA.

Technical issues did not necessarily deter the monitors from using the system to report Domestic Violence (DV) and Human Trafficking (HT) cases if they witnessed them. Compared to data collected at the beginning of the pilot, the known cases of reporting DV and HT cases by monitors had increased by the end of the pilot. Many of those who felt that there were cases to report did so using the EPAWA system. Those that did not use the system did not feel that there was any case to report or stated that they did not want to get involve in private domestic matters.

Technical Design of System

The issues that many monitors complained of did not have to necessarily do with the technical design of the system, but rather the implementation of the technical system. MTN, the largest mobile service provider in Ghana was set to provide both the bulk SMS as well as the toll-free number but failed to deliver in a timely and consistent manner. The use of the data entered and processed by the computer software also seems yet to be accessed and utilized productively by local stakeholders other than certain staff within EPAWA.

Reporting of Human Trafficking/Domestic Violence Occurrences

Two hundred reports in total came through the EPAWA reporting system during the pilot project period. 70% of these reports were approved and/or verified. According to the EPAWA report dated February 2012, 43% of the reports recorded then, were followed up. It appears that the potential for use of the helpline system is real. But organizational structure needs to be built up to ensure that the network has the capacity to follow-up on all of the reports made.



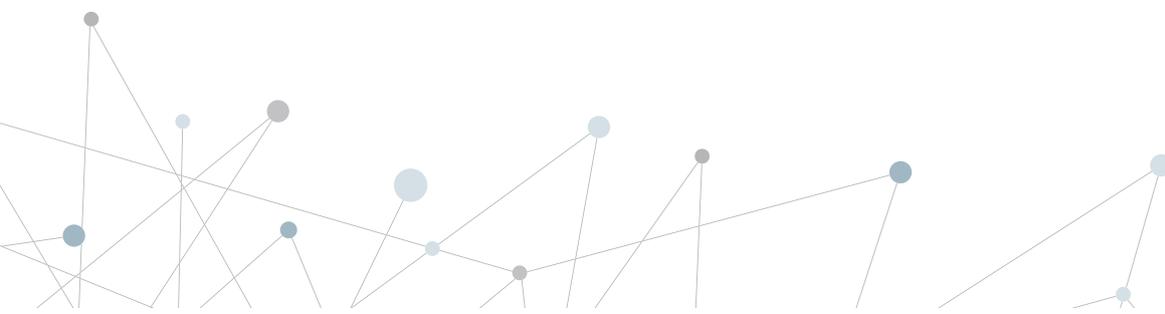
Trust and Perceived Security of System

Only 8% of the monitors interviewed believed that reporting DV cases using EPAWA offered more security because of its anonymity. Therefore, it appears the benefits of the EPAWA helpline system are not necessarily additional security; rather the speed of the reporting is one of the biggest benefits of using the helpline. Further inquiry needs to be made on building an appropriate framework to ensure that the security of individuals reporting is properly addressed within the planning and design phase.

Sustainability

It was observed that the peak in reports occurred whenever EPAWA was out in the field. According to epawasms.org, there have been no new reports mapped since March 2012, after the close of the pilot project. This shows that the project may not be sustainable if there is no constant reporting by monitors and the public. If EPAWA's physical presence is required for monitors to continue to report, the project's sustainability becomes quite questionable.

Further, it was reported by monitors that there was no consistent follow-up on the reports coming in through the system. This too may make the project, in the long run, unsustainable, as the lack of feedback or action taken may discourage people from reporting through the system.



Recommendations

Sustainability

Recommendations for the long-term sustainability of this project revolve around increasing human and organizational capacity of EPAWA, involving more local partners and relevant stakeholders, and testing other technical options before committing to one.

Interviews conducted with Project Stakeholders revealed that there are initiatives similar to the intent and approach of the EPAWA project already in place or in the process of being developed. This includes the following:

- 01 HT Referral System of the MOWAC Human Trafficking Secretariat that aims to facilitate service provision for the victim/survivor of human trafficking. EPAWA can benefit from the network or service providers at the same time that EPAWA can provide inputs to the system;
- 02 Since 2000, a section of the civil society has been operating a Gender Violence Survivor Support Network (GVSNN) that put in place a network of professionals who can provide swift service to survivors. EPAWA can have a strong link with this Network for mutual benefit;
- 03 There is an existing National Database on HT although it is yet to be made public. EPAWA can collaborate to enrich the database and make it more functional also for the Helpline Project.

Especially noting that there were stated capacity issues, the EPAWA project would be strengthened by collaborating with the already existing or currently developing reporting systems. Currently, there are varied efforts from both the government and civil society sector to boost capacities of HT/DV agencies. More collaboration across all of these stakeholders needs to be done.

For the project to be effective and sustainable, EPAWA will need to consider the following:

- Establishing functional links with existing similar initiatives including assisting in enriching the processes based on the organization's strengths;
- Strengthening organizational capacity to deal with the cases effectively; The current three (3) full-time personnel is very limited and logistics are grossly inadequate, including the lack of vehicle;

- Identifying certain types of DV and HT cases that the organization has the most capacity to handle and pursue to conclusion and referring other cases to other groups;
- Ensuring that education in the communities about the effects of HT/DV are a core activity for EPAWA and its DV/HT partners; and
- Increasing capacity building for the frontline agencies.

Future Application in Other Locations

The application of an EPAWA-like system in other countries with DV/HT issues, such as in Southeast Asia, could be piloted. If so, it will be important to Look at different component and lessons learned form this project, and in particular:

01

Technologies used:

Allocate time and resources to have an initial pre-test where various technology options are explored with different service providers. The initial concept for the pilot was to create a Helpline that relied heavily on SMS reports. However, due to the technical difficulties with sending SMS to the Helpline number provided, the monitors were not able to use the SMS Helpline as much as they might have and the toll-free and voice-based calling was used much more than initially planned for by project implementers. At the project design stage, implementers should carefully consider the most appropriate technological method to use, whether it be a voice-based automatic recording service, person-to-person calling, USSD reporting, SMS report, or email report. The choice of the technology needs also to keep in mind the security concerns as related to the protection of the data exchanged, the vulnerabilities of the system and the privacy of the sources.

02

Mobile providers:

While agreement with mobile providers can have a great impact on the overall budget of a project like this one, it is important to test all the different mobile service providers within the country before choosing one. This will guarantee that the infrastructure and the capacity of the mobile provider chosen for the project will not end up jeopardizing the entire system. The choice to do an agreement with a mobile provide should also take into consideration issues related to security of the system and privacy, especially in the case of non-democratic or semi-democratic countries.

03

Cultural behavior:

One important consideration when trying to replicate a project similar to the EPAWA project should be the consideration and evaluation of the existing social dimension of the phenomenon to monitor. The awareness of problems related to domestic violence and human traffic in fact is strictly related to the social and economical dynamics within a community. Those dynamics can influence the development of the project in an important way and for this reason need to be prioritized in the assessment of the solutions proposed.

04

Capacity:

The overall availability of more information is not always associated with greater accuracy or follow-up. In the context of projects similar to this one, the capacity of the organizations handling the information must be assessed prior to the start of the project. The availability of more information can in fact undermine instead of increase the ability to respond in a timely and effective way if the increase in information does not correspond to an equal increase in human capacity.

05

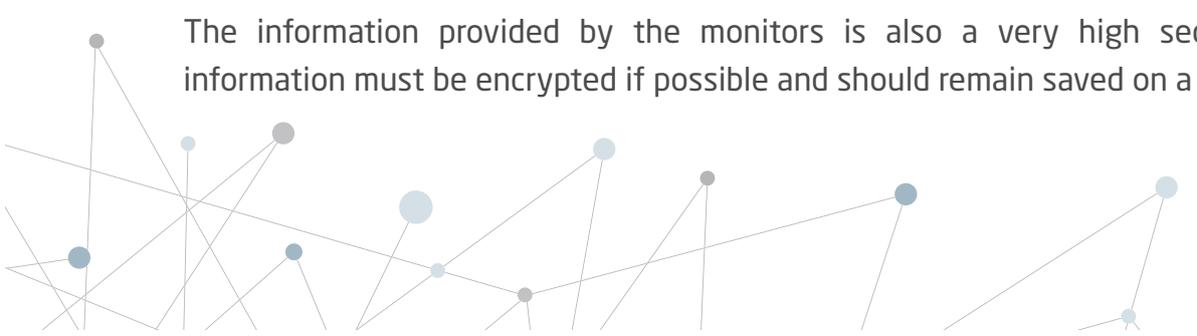
Partnerships and engagement of stakeholders:

The EPAWA project has shown great potential for the use of crowd-source mapping tools to enhance collaboration between different stakeholders. As learned in this project, the previous creation of links and trust between relevant stakeholders is incredibly important to ensure that the response to violations reported can be organized between the different actors without affecting the efficacy of the follow-up and security of the information.

Security

Security issues are two-fold: first is the security of the technology user or monitor, second is the security of the information provided by the monitors. Monitors need to be constantly reminded and trained on how to take precautions while reporting on Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence instances and what to do in the case of a security breach. An emergency process should be carefully created by EPAWA and its stakeholders to be followed in case the identity of a monitor becomes known by the community or another security breach occurs.

The information provided by the monitors is also a very high security risk. The information must be encrypted if possible and should remain saved on a high security



cloud-based file server such as Symantec.cloud, rather than on individual computers. By saving all confidential information “on the cloud” and adding password-encryption onto computers and data, the security of the information will be enhancing significantly.

Cultural Issues

71% of monitors believed the only real and lasting solution to DV and HT was through educating the community about DV/HT and its effects. In tandem with EPAWA’s helpline reporting system, a heavy investment in civic education on DV/HT and how to identify and stop DV/HT incidents is needed. These awareness-building campaigns should targeted to all members of the community since many community members still believe that DV and HT events should be solved at home without any outside intervention. Many are not aware of alternatives to trying to solve such issues at home. More awareness needs to be raised on alternatives and the detriment of keeping quiet when witnessing such incidents.

Enhanced and regular training sessions should be run for the EPAWA monitors to explain to monitors if they should report all suspected cases and to what degree of certainty is needed before reporting.

Technical Issues

Partnerships with local providers

There are a number of telephone communication providers in Ghana but EPAWA was keen to use MTN, perhaps due to the fact that MTN has the widest coverage, best prices for phone handsets and text messaging services, and an already established connection. Nevertheless, over the course of the pilot, the MTN network had many technical issues that severely disrupted the EPAWA pilot. If the project is to continue, EPAWA should experiment with other mobile phone network providers so as to find the most reliable network to use.

Technology

Free phones are not necessary for this project to work. The distribution of free phones for the pilot project served the purpose of “buy-in” into the concept rather than actual participation. For toll-free calling, the issued phones may not have been necessary since a number of monitors ended up using their own personal phones to report. If secure, monitors should be allowed to use their already existing personal phones.

The phones provided for the pilot were faulty and proved problematic to operate. It may be a good consideration to research on more reliable phones to adopt in the implementation of the project.

EPAWA should further consider the use of full-time technology personnel to address the challenges and ensure smooth operations at all times.

