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# Transforming Pain into Power: Mukuru SGBV Survivors Championing Change



Survivors take a photo with Amal Murgian, Susan Otieno, ActionAid and Africa Youth Trust staff on January 10, 2024 in Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Nairobi.

In the heart of Nairobi's informal settlements, a remarkable transformation is taking place. Survivors of Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) in Mukuru Kwa Njenga and Mukuru Kwa Reuben are turning their harrowing experiences into a fierce battle against the very vice that once threatened to silence them.

Our meeting with these resilient individuals on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, was nothing short of inspiring. During the meeting, we were joined by the Access to Justice and Security (A2JS) project donor, Amal Murgian of the Rabelais Trust. The survivors recounted their stories with a strength that can only come from overcoming the darkest of trials.

Violence in Mukuru has left many women and girls hurting—physically, mentally, and emotionally. \*Jolene was 14 years old and in form one when she was defiled by a 23-year-old man. The teenager conceived in the process and after delivery, she discontinued school to nurse her baby who is now one year old.

"I was afraid of telling my mother what happened even when she inquired what was going on with me. But as time went by and my baby bump started showing, I had to disclose the identity of the man who had defiled me. When the mother confronted the man, he admitted his wrongdoing. He was arrested and the case is in progress at the Makadara Law Courts," narrated \*Jolene.

\*Daphne, on the other hand, was gang-raped and she conceived from the ordeal. She carried the pregnancy to term and delivered a baby girl. The pain which was so much to bear was now being aggravated by seeing the baby who was conceived through rape.

"I moved from the area where the ordeal happened and settled in Mukuru and when the pain was too much, I decided to seek help. I am thankful to the counselors offered by the A2JS at the Africa Youth Trust. I healed, though after 10 group and more than 16 individual sessions, I have accepted my daughter and I love her unconditionally. In our various support groups, we got entrepreneurial skills training and thereafter we were granted seed capital. We have done a few businesses in my group and have had failures, but we learnt our lessons and are now doing well with our venture. I now work on the project assisting survivors of SGBV and I have registered a Community-Based Organization where together with a few others I encourage women and girls who have had similar experiences as mine and more. Sex is not a taboo topic in our forums like it has been in the past," said Daphne.



ActionAid International Kenya's Executive Director Susan Otieno (L) and Rabelais Trust Amal Murgian (R) listening to survivors of SGBV in Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Nairobi on January 10, 2024.

Jolene and Daphne are just two from hundreds of women and girls who have survived sexual and gender-based violence in Mukuru.

Amal was impressed with the women and girls for feeling elevated to even recount their ordeals.

She said:

"I am overwhelmed with your resilience, and I hope you continue staying strong and stand up for others."

The survivors implored Rabelais Trust to continue investing in the project so that others too can learn and benefit from the support.



AAIK and UK staff from left- Judy Oduor, Pavlos Maniatopoulos, Dina Domb and Dinah Wambua in Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Nairobi.

The Access to Justice and Security (A2JS) project, generously funded by Rabelais Trust and implemented in Mukuru and Nyalenda, Kisumu County, has been a beacon of hope. Providing survivors with medical attention, counseling, and access to legal justice, this initiative has been vital in their path to recovery. While some have begun to heal, others continue to face their journey head-on, with ongoing cases at the Makadara Law Courts standing as a testament to their courage.

However, the fight is far from over. SGBV continues to cast a long shadow over the lives of women and girls in Mukuru, leaving deep physical, mental, and emotional scars. We must take a stand. Together, we can amplify the voices of these brave survivors and bring an end to SGBV. We invite you to join us in supporting the resources and efforts required to wipe out this scourge.

# Celebrating Innovative Minds at Alternatives to Climate Change Forum!



Participants during the Alternatives to Climate Change Awards at ActionAid Kenya's Global Platform on January 26, 2024.

Over 40 young men and women converged at the Global Platform Nairobi, ActionAid International Kenya's youth hub to showcase their ingenuity and commitment to combating climate change, at the Alternatives to Climate Change Innovations Awards held between January 25th and 26th, 2024.

With little to no resources, these youth have initiated projects that are changing their socio-economic status now, as they look to secure their future. The proactive involvement of young Kenyans in devising and implementing innovative solutions to combat climate change underscores the pivotal role they play in shaping a resilient response to environmental challenges.

10 projects were presented from different counties in Kenya including Homabay, Makeni, Isiolo, Garissa, Kilifi, Baringo, Kakamega, and Kajiado. As the curtains closed on an exhilarating two days of groundbreaking ideas and engaging discussions at the Alternatives to Climate Change forum, winners who have turned their passion for environmental sustainability into actionable solutions were announced by the judges.

Taking the lead with a grand prize of KSh150,000 was Suleiman Keya for his remarkable agroecology project in Kilifi County. His dedication to sustainable farming is seeding hope for a greener future!



Suleiman Mbaji Keya making his Presentation at ActionAid Kenya's Global Platform on January 26, 2024.

Suleiman Keya embarked on an agroecology model of farming in the sandy expanse of Kilifi County and overcame challenges such as water scarcity. Suleiman's venture not only defied environmental odds but also involved new graduates of high school, nurturing them into climate action champions.

"This is awesome, an encouraging shot in the arm and I vow to continue recruiting more young people and women into the agroecology movement," said the elated Suleiman.

In second place, walking away with KSh100,000 was Lucky Kazungu, whose innovative Goat Farming initiative in Kilifi is a game-changer for local agriculture and the economy.

Grabbing the third spot with a prize of KSh75,000 was Damaris Auma Opilu from Baba Dogo, Nairobi County, for her eco-friendly Bamboo Briquette invention. A true testament to cleaner energy solutions!

And not forgetting the commendable fourth position, Edith Lapei who won KSh50,000 for her inspiring work in Permaculture in Baringo. Her project paints a lush future for our environment!

Among other notable innovations were 'One Million Trees' by Abdikadir from Garissa and a promising startup idea in Nairobi, focused on Solar Drier and spearheaded by Wesley Tom. The event resonated as a celebration of innovation, resilience, and a collective commitment to addressing the urgent challenges posed by climate change in Kenya.

ActionAid Kenya's engagement in supporting youth-led actions and fostering climate justice social movements, including Ecological Justice and The Ecovista movements, emphasizes our dedication to nurturing grassroots initiatives. Additionally, ActionAid Kenya has championed sustainable agriculture in Kenya through an agroecology model of farming, collaborating with more than 1,500 farmers to adopt climate-resilient practices that enhance food security and diminish greenhouse gas emissions in rural areas.

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