

# ARMENIA

## Geeks against GBV:

### Unlocking potential of new change makers and leveraging ICT solutions

RESEARCH TEAM: **Bagrat Yengibaryan, Julia Tumasyan**

RESEARCH INSTITUTION: **Enterprise Incubator Foundation**

#### BACKGROUND

Violence against women is a problem in Armenia. Almost 60% of women report experiencing domestic violence in their lifetime,<sup>1</sup> with at least 30 women have been killed at the hands of their intimate partner over the past 5 years.<sup>2</sup> Entrenched patriarchal traditions, negative gender stereotypes and harmful traditional practices impede women's access to services and support and lives free from violence. New and innovative strategies to address violence against women are needed.

Review of existing literature shows an increasing demand for innovative mobile and internet technology solutions to tackle gender based violence. As these technologies become more available around the world, they may become effective tools for preventing and responding to gender based violence (GBV), yet at the same time can be used as tools to further perpetuate violence against women. The project aims to assist efforts to combat gender-based violence in Armenia through the application of cutting-edge ICT technologies and mobile applications.

#### INNOVATION

This innovative project seeks to build the capacity of women's organizations to understand and address technology-based violence, use applications more effectively and securely to prevent GBV, and lead national advocacy efforts. In doing so it will engage new social groups, civic society, and non-governmental agencies around the use of ICT technologies to improve responses and prevent violence against women in Armenia.

#### OBJECTIVES

The project objectives are to:

1. Develop and deliver a mobile application for women that provides them with information on support services
2. Collect data on the prevalence of GBV, its patterns and forms and geographical distribution in Armenia to inform policy and practice
3. Build institutional dialogue among stakeholders in the field of GBV prevention and IT professionals

#### PROJECT ACTIVITIES

To achieve these objectives, this project will:

1. Design and further develop a mobile application building on lessons from past applications. New features will include GPS tracking and navigation, 'abuser reporting' alarm button, an interactive communication module, connectivity with friends, mentors and experts, and discreteness. A final list of new features will be vetted via a hackathon organized during the initial stages of the project.
2. Link the mobile application with a database to make reliable statistical data collection possible, and to draw comparisons between official figures and expert assessments on levels of GBV in Armenia. A mapping exercise will also be undertaken on levels of GBV to identify regional patterns and assess effectiveness and efficiency of policy and implemented projects.
3. Convene dialogue forums between GBV and IT professionals on GBV prevention and response in Armenia and look at synergies for private-public-partnerships.
4. Create a referral mechanism for survivors of gender based violence.
5. Design a new qualitative approach and instrument for evaluation of GBV response and prevention efforts using mobile applications.
6. Provide easy and unlimited access to advisory services and allow every woman to receive support regardless of urban or rural settings.

#### POLICY AND ADVOCACY IMPLICATIONS

The project aims at re-invigorating efforts of key stakeholders in Armenia in combating gender based violence, by mobile applications and peer-mentor networks. Another important output of the project is a database that will link mobile applications with records of various types of violence. In the long term, such a database will provide project stakeholders with data for improved policy formulation, design, and implementation of interventions, monitoring, and impact evaluation of responses to gender based violence.

1. <https://www.osce.org/yerevan/88229?download=true>

2. [http://coalitionagainstviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Femicide\\_Report\\_ENG.pdf?be05b6](http://coalitionagainstviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Femicide_Report_ENG.pdf?be05b6)

