Online mapping to end sexual and domestic violence
A Research Report on the implementation of the ATTI Project in the Republic of Congo

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1.   Background on ICTs in Congo

The Republic of Congo is currently engaged in a policy of modernisation in the telecommunications sector, and has made significant progress in the electronic communications sector in the past few years. With regard to the internet specifically, fibre optic initiatives have made it possible to expand access for the Congolese population. There are a number of projects underway, including the Central African Backbone (CAB) project, which will provide the Congo with fibre optic telecommunications infrastructure and ensure interconnection among the countries of the Central Africa sub-region; the West Africa Cable System (WACS), which will connect the Congo to the international high-speed internet system by way of a submarine fibre optic cable along the Atlantic coast of Africa; and the National Coverage Project (PCN), which is aimed at interconnecting large cities and installing metropolitan area networks to provide greater internet access to businesses, organisations and private users.

Other important initiatives include the establishment of the Agence Congolaise de Nommage Internet du Congo (ACNIC), which will administer the country-code top level domain .cg, and the installation of an internet exchange point (IXP) to optimise local traffic and enhance the quality of internet service.

There are roughly a dozen internet access providers (IAPs) in the Republic of Congo who provide service to 1,924 subscribers (ARPCE). Meanwhile, now that internet access is also possible through mobile phones, there are more and more Congolese going online. The mobile telephony penetration rate was 108.5% in the first quarter of 2014 (ARPCE), with more than 4.8 million mobile subscribers registered with the four mobile service providers operating in the country.

There are 295,132 Internet users as of December, 2011, 6.8% of the population, per ITU and 107,640 Facebook users which is a 2.5% penetration rate.[1]

2.   Prior use of mapping for women's rights in the Congo

In the Republic of Congo, there was no previous experience in using online mapping to advance the rights of women and children. However, in the area of combating violence against women and girls, an analysis of the response to sexual violence was carried out by UNICEF in 2008 in the aftermath of the armed conflict in the Congo. In addition, the Congolese Association to Combat Violence Against Women and Girls (ACOLVF) conducted data gathering and research in different regions. During the armed conflict and post-conflict years, data was also routinely collected on sexual violence in the Congo by different public institutions (national and local governments) and private institutions (NGOs and churches). At that time, the weaknesses identified through the analysis of the situation carried out by UNICEF included, among others, the lack of coordination among the different institutions

[1]http://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm

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and structures involved in the fight against violence against women and girls and the lack of common tools (such as identification records of the victims of violence).

We could therefore say that the necessary elements to develop an online map of violence were already in place in the Congo, before the APC AFRICATTI project. It is not unusual today to see CSOs that use "offline" maps to identify or illustrate their intervention sites.

3. How was the project implemented?

The project was implemented by the Women's Rights Programme of the Association for Progressive Communications and AZUR Développement.

4. How were the project sites in the Republic of Congo chosen?

In the Republic of Congo, the project focused on an urban and semi-urban area and a rural area. AZUR Développement chose to execute the project in Pointe-Noire and Nkayi, where it had already undertaken activities aimed at combating violence against women and girls. These included the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign, which it had carried out there since 2010, and in collaboration with other CSOs since 2011. As a result, AZUR Développement had a certain amount of experience on the ground in these areas, and had also already worked in collaboration with local authorities. In addition, the mapping project had been conceived on the hypothesis that it should be executed in areas where activities with CSOs were already underway. As such, the project would not provide funding for regular activities to combat violence against women and girls, but rather for documenting these activities and using the map and resulting data as an advocacy tool.

- **Prior activities in Pointe-Noire:**

From 2009 to 2011, in conjunction with APC WRP, a capacity-building project for women's organisations to support the strategic use of ICTs to end violence against women and girls. From 2010 to 2012, a project for the use of ICTs to combat violence against women and girls with the Sigrid Rausing Trust, and the organisation of a training-of-trainers workshop on ICTs with the Feminist Review Trust. In 2012 and 2013, a project for the economic reintegration of women and girls who have been victims of sexual and domestic violence. In 2011 and 2012, a leadership project for girls carried out in schools to combat sexual harassment and violence with the Global Fund for Women.

- **Prior activities in Nkayi:**

From 2010 to 2012, a project for the use of ICTs to combat violence against women and girls with the Sigrid Rausing Trust. In 2012, a project to promote psychological and social support for women and children victims of violence in conjunction with the Project to Consolidate Reconciliation (PCR), funded by the European Union.

5. Local partners

The project worked with two women's CSOs and 1 men's CSO that work to combat violence against women and girls in Pointe-Noire and Nkayi. These CSOs were designated as the local partners and were involved in the planning, implementation and follow-up of activities on the ground.

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The AZUR Développement team selected the CSOs Agence Régionale d'Information et de Prévention sur le SIDA (Regional AIDS Information and Prevention Agency - ARIPS) and Réseau des Associations de Solidarité Positive (Network of Positive Solidarity Associations - RASPC) in Pointe-Noire and Association des Femmes pour le Développement de la Bouenza (Association of Women for the Development of Bouenza - AFDB) because they had already been involved in activities to combat sexual and domestic violence (through prevention and/or support). These organisations had also already worked with AZUR Développement, particularly ARIPS (on the APC WNSP and Sigrid Rausing Trust projects) and AFDB (on the Sigrid Rausing Trust and PCR projects). The RASPC had previously received support from AZUR Développement in 2010 for the organisation of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign.

In addition, AZUR Développement included its two branches in Pointe-Noire and Nkayi as local partners in the implementation of the project. The partnerships with the CSOs were formalised through memoranda of agreement signed with AZUR Développement.

AZUR Développement had initially planned to work with another two SCOs, but due to budget limitations, it was unable to pursue these partnerships.

What were the capacities of the local partners at the beginning of the project?

The local partners had developed capacities in several areas before the project began.

- **Human resources:**

All of the CSOs and the local branches of AZUR Développement had at least two to three members who had received training and had an understanding of sexual and domestic violence, and had already participated in campaigns and/or activities to raise awareness around violence. Some, like RAPSC, had experience in following the cases of victims of violence in the courts. Thus they came to the project with prior experience and with members – women, men and young people – already engaged in the struggle against violence.

- **Information, education and communication (IEC) on sexual and domestic violence**

The local partner organisations had proven IEC capacities, as they had already organised and continued to carry out awareness-raising activities on the prevention of sexual and domestic violence with local communities and the media. ARIPS and AZUR Développement Nkayi hosted radio programmes on the subject themselves, sometimes without the assistance of journalists. AFDB and AZUR Développement Pointe-Noire had organised various awareness-raising activities. IEC modules on violence had been developed with the support of the PCR project and served as the basis for IEC activities by all of the CSOs. In 2011-2012, the two local branches of AZUR Développement had carried out awareness-raising activities that reached at least 6,632 girls and women and 1,175 boys and men, 136 police officers, and 522 teachers and community leaders (through a project supported by the Sigrid Rausing Trust and the PCR).

- **Counselling and psychological support**

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Through trainings organised by AZUR Développement (as part of a project supported by the Sigrid Rausing Trust) in Pointe-noire and Nkayi in 2011, members of the SCOs ARIPS and AFDB were trained in counselling and psychological support for victims of violence. Since then, these CSOs have enhanced the skills they have acquired every year. This has also contributed to their capacity for following the cases of violence identified by the APC AFRICATTI project. Nevertheless, while these organisations were able to provide basic counselling and support services, they were limited in their ability to deal with particularly serious cases, for which they referred the victims to psychologists or medical centres.

The local partners faced difficulties at the beginning of the project in the following areas:

  ▪ **Legal capacities**

All of the local partners as well as the local branches of AZUR Développement needed to further develop their capacities with regard to legal issues around sexual and domestic violence. With the exception of AZUR Développement Pointe-Noire, which was headed up by a woman jurist, the other local partners had no legal experts among their members.

As a result, these organisations were in need of guidelines on the different stages of cases of violence requiring follow-up by the police and the courts. Some needed basic skills, from the drafting of a denunciation to an understanding of the workings of the judicial system. To meet this need, the APC AFRICATTI project developed Power Point presentations and training modules to build the legal capacities of the local organisations, since it would be impossible to follow and document cases of violence effectively without members or volunteers who had the capacity needed to identify, recognise and analyse malfunctioning of the judicial system.

  ▪ **Intervention, monitoring and evaluation approaches**

The local partner CSOs all work on violence against women and girls, but each has its own intervention approach, and they often work in isolation. None of them had a well-defined strategy that could be adapted to other organisations and scaled up. There was a certain lack of accountability, in terms of both rendering accounts of their activities to local authorities, but also in terms of holding these authorities accountable for combating sexual and domestic violence. Most of the organisations had also not yet developed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

It was therefore necessary to develop an intervention strategy at the district or neighbourhood level and then harmonise the existing monitoring and evaluation tools. In this way, the work of gathering data, monitoring and documenting cases would be facilitated and understood by all of the CSOs. The project thus organised a strategic meeting with the CSOs and several other stakeholders (departmental/provincial agencies, municipal governments, community leaders) to develop an intervention approach that would enable a rapid reading of the effectiveness and impact of the interventions by the CSOs. The APC AFRICATTI project also developed harmonised data collection sheets and assisted the CSOs in defining an intervention approach that has continued even after the end of the project.

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Throughout the implementation of the project, monthly meetings were held for follow-up among the local partner CSOs and local branches of AZUR Développement. Quarterly meetings were then held with stakeholders (departmental agencies, local governments, community leaders, civilian and military police) under the leadership of the departmental office for the promotion of women, during which reports on the follow-up of cases of violence were presented and discussed, the actions to be taken were identified, and responsibilities were defined. This enabled the resolution of cases of child abandonment and abuse as well as conjugal violence and rape.

- **ICT capacities**

Although the local partners had members or volunteers with basic skills in computer and internet use, they needed training to upgrade those skills and learn to use new tools and software. ARIPS had one computer and an internet connection for which they paid 30,000 CFA francs (USD 60) a month, depending on the availability of financial resources. In the meantime, RASPC and AFDB did not have a single computer or digital camera. They were obliged to go to cybercafés or the offices of the local AZUR Développement branches in Pointe-Noire and Nkayi.

The challenges of using computers in cybercafés to access data collection files or help victims write up reports against perpetrators of violence were swiftly felt, particularly with regard to issues of the protection of privacy. The partner CSOs had received advice and training on safeguarding privacy and protecting files on a computer shared by numerous users and on USB memory sticks. However, because the ATTI funding did not foresee the acquisition of computer equipment, the lack of equipment among the CSOs posed a major obstacle for putting the ICT lessons learned into practice.

With regard to the use of the platform, the partner CSOs did not have the information and capacities needed to use it themselves to import data and update information on the cases they were following, as had been foreseen at the beginning of the project. As a result, AZUR Développement had to carry out this task itself, receiving the data gathered by email and then importing it to the platform.

- **Financial resources**

For most CSOs in the Republic of Congo, insufficient financial resources pose an obstacle to the scaling up of activities, even when these have proven to have an impact. This was the case for the project in question, in which the partner CSOs were limited in their ability to expand their work to a larger area.

The APC AFRICATTI project covered three of the six *arrondissements* (districts) in the city of Pointe-Noire (i.e. one half). In Nkayi, while its two districts were both covered, the surrounding villages were not, and there are many cases of violence in rural areas. The original project budget did not allocate funding for the local partners, as the project was meant to support the documentation of the regular activities carried out by the CSOs involved. Although the budget was revised, funds remained limited.

Nevertheless, the local partners overcame these financial limitations and carried out remarkable work in the documentation of sexual and domestic violence.

6.   What was the role of the local partners in the implementation of the project?

The local partners (ARIPS, RASPC, AFDB, AZUR Développement Nkayi, AZUR Développement Pointe-Noire) played a major role in the implementation of the project. They were responsible for:

- ❖ Planning and executing the activities on the ground.
- ❖ Lobbying local governments and community leaders for interventions in the districts involved.
- ❖ Covering districts and communities: developing working relations with community and neighbourhood leaders, police stations, health centres and schools.
- ❖ Recording and following cases of violence identified in the communities they covered.
- ❖ Documenting the cases they followed and sending the data to the AZUR Développement so that it could be imported to the online platform.
- ❖ Preparing and participating in monthly project follow-up meetings.
- ❖ Preparing and participating in quarterly meetings with stakeholders (departmental authorities, civilian and military police).
- ❖ Monitoring the implementation of the decisions/actions identified in the quarterly meetings with stakeholders.
- ❖ Participating in APC's Take Back the Tech! 16 Days of Activism campaign.

7.   Activities carried out

Various activities were carried out by the project in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and Nkayi, of which the most important were: capacity-building workshops on legal issues and ICTs; advocacy workshops; identification and follow-up of cases; design and updating of the online platform to document violence; quarterly meetings to follow up on cases with stakeholders; and the 16 Days of Activism campaign against violence against women and girls.

Capacity-building workshops on legal issues and ICTs

Twenty participants, including members of AZUR Développement and the local partner CSOs, journalists and survivors of violence, took part in the following training modules: different types of support for victims of violence (psychological and legal); the security of electronic data on survivors of violence and respect for privacy; medical assistance for women and children who have experienced violence; creating a Facebook account; creating and publishing content on a blog; SMS campaigns; and exchanges on indicators of success in the fight against domestic and sexual violence for CSOs. The participants were also able to strengthen certain basic ICT skills (email, online translation tools, etc.).

Advocacy meetings and workshops

The project organised a workshop for the launching of the project in Brazzaville and a strategic meeting for the development of an intervention approach and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in Pointe-Noire in November 2012. A national advocacy workshop was organised in Brazzaville in July 2013. These meetings and workshops were attended by representatives of various ministries, the civilian and military police forces, the courts, civil society, the media and survivors of violence.

More than 125 local government members and community leaders were sensitised on the struggle against domestic and sexual violence through advocacy meetings organised in 2013 in Pointe-Noire and Nkayi by AZUR Développement, ARIPS, RASPC and AFDB.
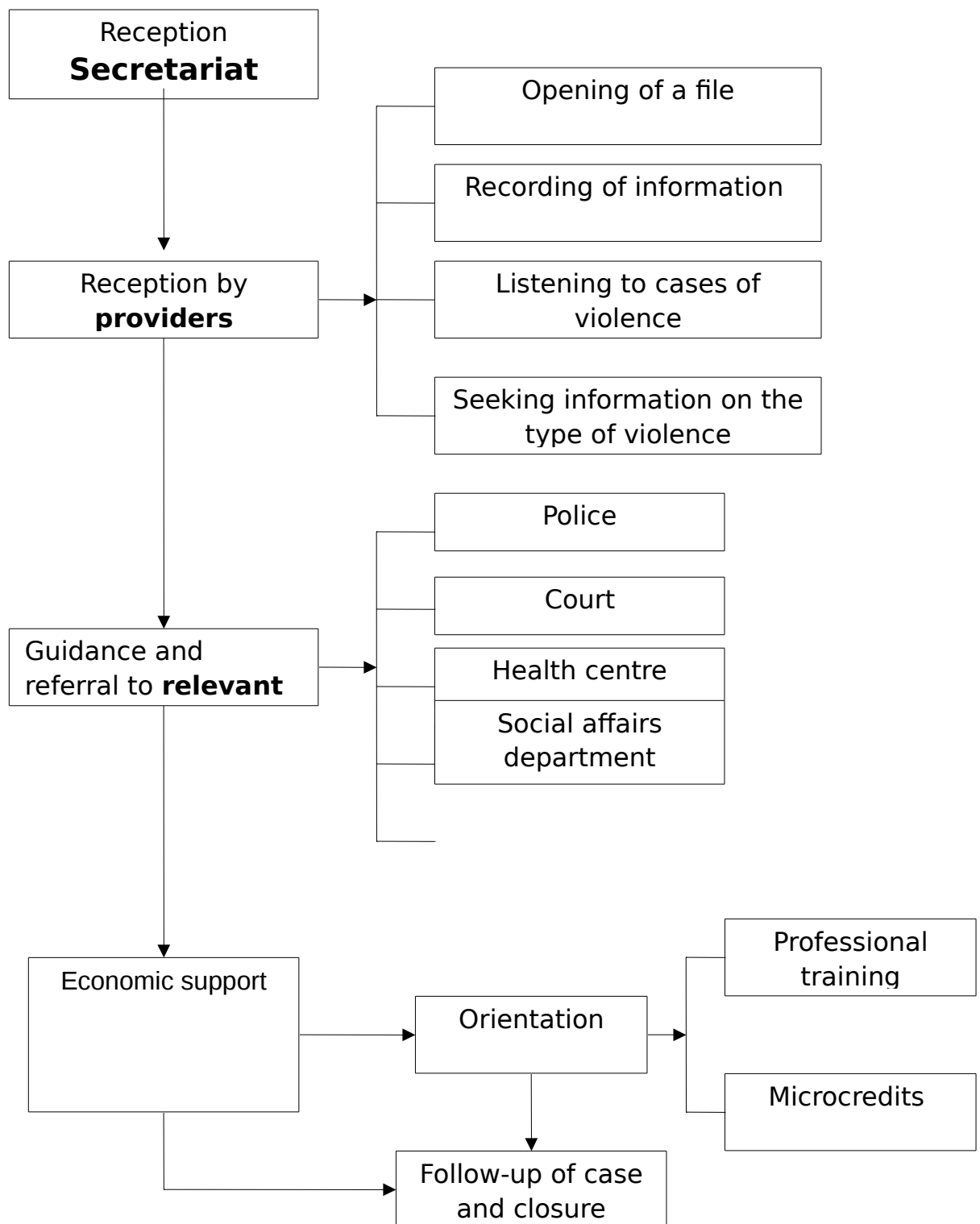
These advocacy efforts resulted in:

- ✓ The engagement of local authorities in the project
- ✓ The redefinition of the project's intervention strategy
- ✓ The identification of the five districts for project implementation
- ✓ The modification and adaptation of the data collection sheet (already developed by the project carried out by AZUR Développement with the PCR) for use with the online platform
- ✓ The establishment of a system for reporting to the authorities and monitoring the work of the CSOs
- ✓ The strengthening of collaboration with the media for the wide dissemination of information to the public.

Identification and follow-up of cases

The process for the identification and follow-up of cases involved the following steps:

- ✓ Strategy meeting
- ✓ Selection of five districts in Pointe-Noire (Lumumba, Loandjili, Tié-Tié) and Nkayi (Muananto, Soulouka)
- ✓ Distribution of the districts among the CSOs according to where their operations are based
- ✓ Advocacy meetings in the five districts under the coordination of local governments
- ✓ Mapping of the districts and identification of entry points for victims of violence (health centres, police stations, community leaders, schools and churches)
- ✓ Regular monitoring by CSO community workers
- ✓ Listening to the cases in the offices of the CSOs and referral and follow-up at three levels: health services, civilian or military police, justice system and social affairs or local government offices.

- ▪ **Orientation** for cases of domestic and sexual violence as illustrated in Figure 1.

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- **Figure 1. Orientation for cases of domestic and sexual violence**

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┌──────────────────┐
│    Reception     │
│  Secretariat     │                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
└────────┬─────────┘                    │     Opening of a file    │
         │                              └──────────────────────────┘
         │                              ┌──────────────────────────┐
         │                              │  Recording of information│
         ▼                              └──────────────────────────┘
┌──────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
│   Reception by   │──────────────────▶ │     Listening to cases   │
│    providers     │                    │       of violence        │
└────────┬─────────┘                    └──────────────────────────┘
         │                              ┌──────────────────────────┐
         │                              │ Seeking information on the│
         │                              │     type of violence     │
         │                              └──────────────────────────┘
         │                              ┌──────────────────────────┐
         │                              │          Police          │
         │                              └──────────────────────────┘
         │                              ┌──────────────────────────┐
         ▼                              │          Court           │
┌──────────────────┐                    └──────────────────────────┘
│  Guidance and    │──────────────────▶ ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ referral to      │                    │       Health centre      │
│   relevant       │                    ├──────────────────────────┤
└────────┬─────────┘                    │     Social affairs       │
         │                              │       department         │
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┌──────────────────┐                                          ┌──────────────────┐
│ Economic support │         ┌──────────────┐                 │   Professional   │
│                  │────────▶│  Orientation │────────────────▶│     training     │
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         │                   │Follow-up of  │
         └──────────────────▶│ case and     │
                             │  closure     │
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Development and updating of the online platform for monitoring violence

The development of the platform attracted a great deal of interest from the local and national press as well as civil society and international organisations, due to the lack of available and up-to-date data on violence against women and girls.

The platform for monitoring domestic violence (www.violencedomestiqu-congo.net) was jointly developed by APC and AZUR Développement. A total of 174 cases of domestic and sexual violence were reported. At least 28 journalists were informed about the platform and have visited it and shared comments for its improvement.

The platform was developed for documentation and advocacy purposes to assist in the monitoring and assistance work in cases of violence carried out by AZUR Développement, ARIPS, RASPC et AFDB.

Quarterly meetings to follow up on cases with stakeholders

Five stakeholder meetings were organised in Pointe-Noire (three meetings) and Nkayi (two meetings) under the coordination of the Departmental Office for the Promotion of Women in Pointe-Noire and the Office for the Integration of Women in Development in Nkayi.

These meetings were attended by 30 participants (18 men and 12 women), representatives of the Departmental Office for the Promotion of Women, the Office for the Integration of Women in Development, the human rights office, the civilian and military police, the health care system, hospital directors, offices of social affairs and civic education, local government offices, the local partner CSOs, and human rights CSOs invited to participate, as well as the media.

The meetings, which lasted two to three hours, comprised: (i) taking of attendance, (ii) a review of the cases addressed in the previous meeting (when appropriate), (iii) reading of the report on the cases being followed, and (iv) definition of the actions to be taken by the participants on cases requiring support/assistance or follow-up. Minutes of the meetings were taken by AZUR Développement and then amended by the departmental director before being distributed to the participants.

In Pointe-Noire, the first report covers the period February-May 2013, and the second May-July 2013. A total of 47 cases were identified and followed during 2013:

- 13 cases of rape
- 16 cases of conjugal violence and conjugal rape
- 16 cases of child abuse and neglect
- 4 cases of physical violence
- 5 cases of psychological violence
- 3 cases of other forms of sexual violence.

In Nkayi, the first report covers the period January-July 2013, and the second August-November 2013. A total of 127 cases were identified and followed during 2013:

- 18 cases of rape
- 5 cases of conjugal violence and conjugal rape
- 23 cases of child abuse and neglect
- 40 cases of physical violence (primarily connected with conjugal violence)
- 21 cases of psychological violence
- 16 cases of economic violence

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- 4 cases of other forms of sexual violence (incitement to immorality/defilement, etc.).

The CSOs listened to the victims, and provided them with comfort and support, advice, guidance, and psychological assistance, in accordance with their needs.

These meetings made it possible to shed light on the obstacles to access to justice and health care for victims of domestic and sexual violence in the presence of the different actors involved.

After these meetings, actions were recommended and discussed with the stakeholders. Follow-up and monitoring were carried out by the CSO that had identified the particular case. The cases followed were documented on a data collection sheet, and this data was then passed on to AZUR Développement to be uploaded to the online platform.

The project resulted in achieving justice for survivors of violence in numerous ways: taking cases to court to obtain child support for abandoned mothers and children, the provision of assistance such as clothing by social affairs agencies, the prosecution of perpetrators of violence, etc.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign

Various activities were carried out in the Congo as part of the campaign, including workshops, awareness-raising sessions, radio and television broadcasts, an e-newsletter, and the display of banners with key messages.

A total of 464 people – 60 women, 293 girls and 111 men – were directly informed about issues related to domestic and sexual violence and the procedures for reporting acts of violence to the police or the courts.

We would estimate that another 1,000 women and girls and 1,000 men were indirectly reached through radio and television broadcasts during the campaign.

8.   Outcomes achieved

- ✓ In practical terms in the CSOs: Before the project, the four CSOs involved had collaborated in specific actions on violence against women and girls as well in other areas, such as HIV/AIDS. This project made it possible to the for CSOs to: (i) plan, coordinate and implement actions to combat violence against women and girls in neighbourhoods/communities; (ii) reassess their own strategies and design a single, unified strategy for action, including advocacy; (iii) develop harmonised tools (data collection sheets, etc.) instead of using the disparate tools previously used by the different CSOs; (iv) keep local authorities informed through follow-up reports on cases of violence and stakeholder meetings, as well as through direct contact with neighbourhood and community leaders, who to some extent were previously unaware of this violence.

- ✓ In terms of participatory follow-up with local authorities: The stakeholder meetings served to hold local authorities accountable for their responsibilities, at least at the level of local governments, with regard to (i) keeping informed of cases of violence and other problems experienced by a sector of the population; (ii) seeking solutions

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together (for example, two agencies could respond to problems raised by the same case of violence: the military police and the social affairs agency).

These practices have been adopted and continued in the project for legal, health and economic support being implemented by AZUR Développement with the same local partners with funding from the Embassy of France (2014).

This ensures the continuity of the best practices drawn from the APC AFRICATTI project, which enabled the CSOs to define a more effective strategy to combat violence against women and girls.

- ✓ <u>Capacity building in the four CSOs:</u> The project improved the intervention approach of the four CSOs – AZUR Développement, ARIPS, RASPC and AFDB – in the prevention of violence against women and girls and support for victims of violence. While they had already developed IEC and counselling skills, the project enabled them to redefine their approach at the district and neighbourhood level, making their services more accessible to communities. At the same time, they expanded their capacities in the use of ICT tools by participating in the process of developing an online map to monitor violence, as well as acquiring skills and knowledge around respect for and protection of privacy in both online and offline activities.

By documenting and tracking a case of violence from its identification to the search for solutions/assistance on the online platform, the CSOs were able to use verifiable data to remedy the shortcomings and weaknesses of previously executed projects and to propose strategies that proved to be effective and continue to be implemented.

- ✓ <u>Engagement and accountability of local authorities:</u> The local governments and departmental offices of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women played a key and ongoing role in the project in terms of disseminating information to the public, validating data on cases of violence and seeking solutions for the victims of violence from the civilian and military police, departmental human rights offices, the courts, local governments and social affairs agencies. This partnership with public authorities enabled the CSOs to work more effectively on the ground.

- ✓ <u>Improvement of the system for identification, counselling and follow-up of cases of violence</u>: The redefinition of the system to focus on specific districts and neighbourhoods played a key role in the success of the project. Regular visits to the districts by the CSOs strengthened their working relations with neighbourhood and community leaders. This is a strategy that could be shared with other CSOs. AZUR Développement, ARIPS, RASPC and AFDB established a work model that will have long-term impacts because this mechanism has continued to be used even after the end of the project.

   Counselling: All of the victims of violence who were identified in the communities or went to the CSOs were provided with counselling, sometimes on up to three occasions. They benefited from the phschological support of being listened to and felt free to speak about their problems or "secrets". This is the first step towards healing.

Follow-up of cases of violence: There is greater trust on the part of communities to call on the partner CSOs to follow up on their reports filed with the civilian or military police, as well as cases filed in court. The victims of violence and/or their families now have more information on legal and judicial procedures. They feel supported even if their cases are settled out of court.

✓ <u>Greater availability of information on access to services for victims of sexual and domestic violence:</u> This information has been made more available within local communities through churches, community leaders, police stations and military police posts as well as though radio messages and media coverage of the project activities. Victims of violence or their families now call or visit the offices of the participating CSOs.

✓ <u>Online platform for documenting domestic violence:</u> The platform has attracted a great deal of interest, not only because of the way it documents the work carried out, but also as a source of evidence and data on sexual and domestic violence. The data collection sheets were harmonised, because each CSO had previously used its own method for gathering data. Each CSO has also become accustomed to uploading the data collection sheets at the offices of AZUR Développement or cybercafés so that the data can be imported to the platform, allowing for better monitoring and follow-up of cases of violence.

9.   **What the project did not achieve:**

✓ <u>Fighting poverty:</u> Most children and women who are victims of abuse and conjugal violence continue to endure it because of a lack of means of livelihood. They are often economically dependent on their abusers and thus cannot escape, speak out or report the violence, for fear of being put out on the street. The beneficiaries of the APC AFRICATTI project spoke about the problems they face due to poverty and requested support for income-generating activities or professional training, which the project was not able to provide.

✓ <u>Reporting cases of violence by SMS</u>: The platform was designed for use on the internet, which limited its use by local partner CSOs and also by the victims of violence themselves.

10.   **Lessons learned**

What worked

- The process of developing an online map led the CSOs to rethink their strategies for combating domestic and sexual violence, to gain greater skills and capacities in ICT use, and to strengthen their advocacy work.

- The engagement and involvement of public authorities, the coordination of stakeholder meetings by the departmental offices of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, the advocacy workshops in the districts organised with the support of local

governments, and the participation in stakeholder meetings by representatives of the civilian and military police, human rights offices, social affairs offices and hospitals.

- The intervention approach focusing on districts/neighbourhoods is a more effective way for CSOs to make their services accessible to the public, to prevent the duplication of efforts, and to build lasting relationships between the CSOs, local authorities and communities. This approach builds greater trust, which leads to more cases of violence being reported to the CSOs.

- The stakeholder meetings are a good platform for discussing the shortcomings and weaknesses in responses to sexual and domestic violence and seeking more effective response strategies.

- The Hivos ATTI Fund manager's visit to Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, meetings with project beneficiaries and local partner CSOs and participation in the advocacy workshop had a positive impact.

What did not work

- The local partner CSOs (ARIPS, RASPC and AFDB) that did not have their own computer equipment faced difficulties in accessing the internet and were therefore unable to import the data to the online platform themselves.

- The project had a limited budget to support the work of the CSOs in gathering data on the ground and their regular IEC activities, counselling and medical and social assistance for victims of violence beyond the documentation of cases.

- For the victims of violence whose cases were followed by the CSOs, there were fewer problems observed with regard to dealing with the civilian and military police; however, the costs of court summons and medical certificates had to be covered by the complainants themselves. The stakeholder meetings did not change these practices, but these obstacles were at least raised for discussion, opening the way to dialogue on the matter.

11.   Recommendations

- **For the CSOs**

  ✓ Continue with the online mapping project and regular activities to support victims of violence.
  ✓ Expand activities to reach all of the districts of the city of Pointe-Noire.
  ✓ Introduce this approach in the city of Brazzaville.
  ✓ Continue with advocacy regarding the costs related to health care for victims of sexual and physical violence and assistance for victims of violence to cover the costs related to the processing of their cases by the police and the courts (medical certificates, court summons, arrest of the perpetrators and other costs).

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- **For APC**

  ✓ Continue with the online mapping project with AZUR Développement and the local partner CSOs.
  ✓ Incorporate the acquisition of computer equipment and tablets to facilitate data gathering and the importing of data to the online platform.
  ✓ Organise an activity for sharing the experiences and outcomes of the APC AFRICATTI project in the Republic of Congo.

- **For the AFRICATTI Fund and other donors**

  ✓ Support a second phase of the APC AFRICATTI project to enhance the outcomes achieved and extend the project to the city of Brazzaville.
  ✓ Support the acquisition of computer equipment and tablets to facilitate data gathering and the importing of data to the online platform.
  ✓ Support the participation of the CSOs in regional or international meetings/events to share their experiences.

- **For the departmental offices for the integration of women and the promotion of women and local governments**

  ✓ Continue to support civil society initiatives aimed at ending violence against women and girls.