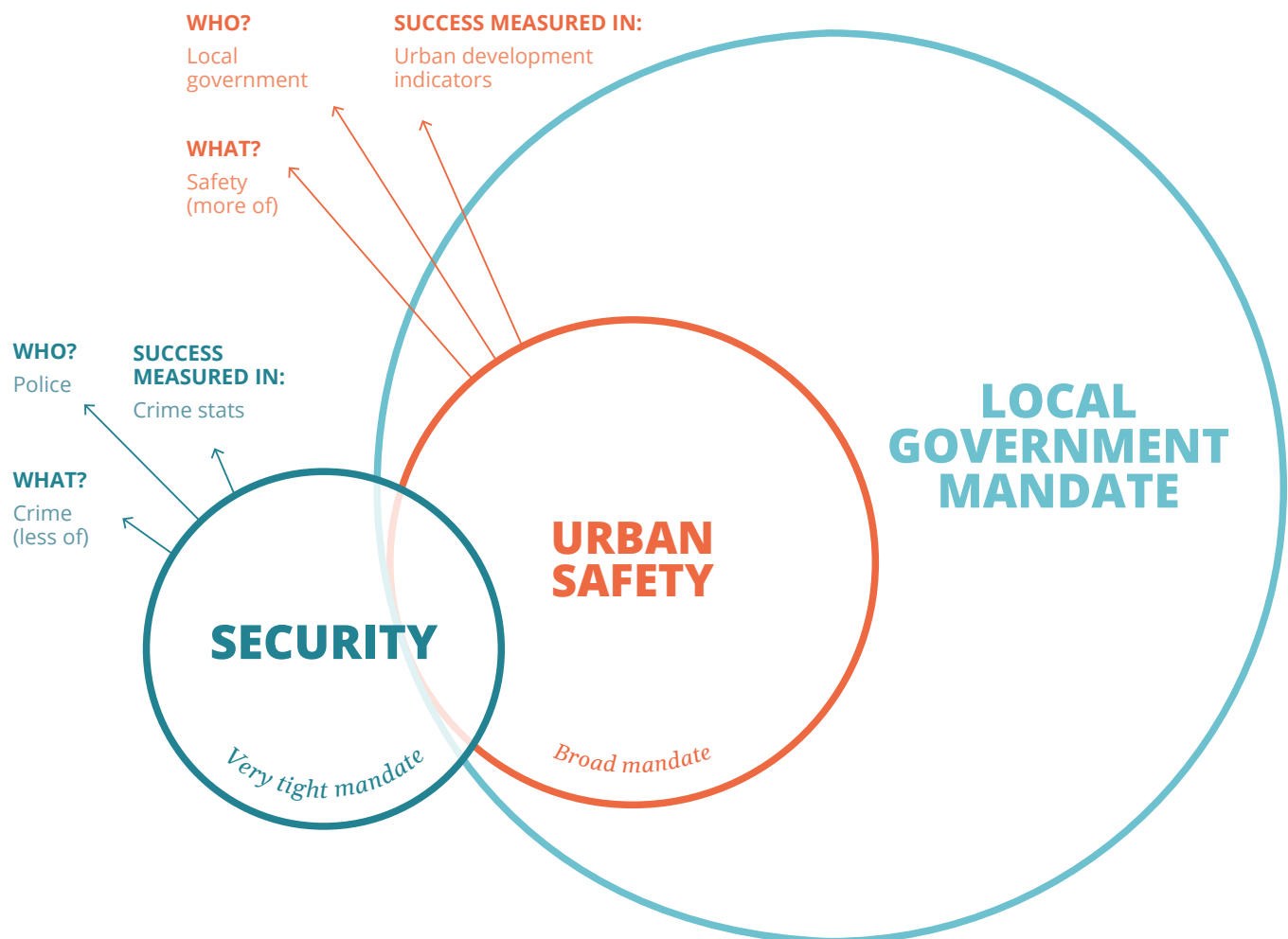# SAFE WOMEN SAFER CITIES

CITIES, UNSAFETY AND WOMEN

It is not the job of local government to regulate crime

Crime, violence and unsafety are top of mind for many South Africans. We are and have for many years been scared, angry and desperate. This is a complex and difficult set of problems with far-reaching consequences and no simple solutions. Government, the private sector, civil society and academia have all invested years of time, resources and energy into making us safer, yet the problems persist.

For municipalities, aside from the devastating consequences of crime and violence for individual citizens, unsafety is a deep barrier to the achievement of key **social and economic goals.**

Municipalities cannot ignore crime and violence, but what should they be doing about it?

We distinguish **security**: *protection against and response to known and perceived risks;* from **safety**: *well-being, cohesion and access to opportunities and shelter,* achieved through prevention approaches, urban planning and management, inclusion, and good governance.

WHO?
Local government

SUCCESS MEASURED IN:
Urban development indicators

WHAT?
Safety (more of)

WHO?
Police

SUCCESS MEASURED IN:
Crime stats

WHAT?
Crime (less of)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANDATE

URBAN SAFETY

SECURITY

Very tight mandate

Broad mandate

ROLE

'Prevent, combat and investigate crime, maintain public order, protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property, uphold and enforce the law'.

First responder, victim support, investigation, arrest, prepare for prosecution, implement national policies, justice, public order, crime prevention, communication.

ROLE

The objects of local government are:
a. Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
b. Ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;
c. Promote social and economic development;
d. Promote a safe and healthy environment; and
e. Encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.'

Create conducive environment, maintenance, transport and mobility, services, access to opportunities, design and planning, by-laws, crime prevention, communication.

Whereas policing is appropriately the lead agency for security, it should not be the lead agency for safety. Rather it is a key partner in the context of an integrative, systemic approach that incorporates both security and safety approaches.

Cities have very limited mandates and powers to intervene in and respond to criminal acts.

What Cities have that is a much wider range of mandates that, while not necessarily obviously connected to safety, contribute significantly to how safe or unsafe the city is.

Local government mandate and urban safety: casting a safety lens on everything the city does

If the local government mandate is understood to fall into five categories: **services, community, healthy and safe environment, development** and **governance,** then a detailed look at the objectives under each of those categories reveals **strengthened, nuanced outcomes for those objectives with the benefit of a safety lens.**

The positioning of safety as central to the mandate of local government is the conceptual turning point for wider inclusion of safety principles in planning processes. This will lead to systemic planning and implementation, better safety results and strengthened service delivery.

Safety is often seen as outside the core business of local government, and less important than transport, service delivery, infrastructure and planning, while it can strengthen these objectives.

GOVERNANCE

Transversal governance
Sustainable change only possible with a systems approach

Accountability
Trust is fundamental to collective action to achieve safety

Budgeting
If we want more vibrance we can't only spend money on crime prevention

Design & planning
Long-term view, systems view

By-laws
Tool for creating an enabling, conducive environment

Knowledge management
Understanding the status of the city, keeping nuanced records

Access to information
Empowering citizens to navigate the city and their lives

Partnerships
Shared systemic objectives drive sustainable partnerships

SERVICES

Transport & mobility
Transport only results in mobility if it is safe and accessible for all

Water & sanitation
Unsafety undermines the effective delivery of these services

Waste management
Has a huge impact on safety

Emergency services
Emergencies can be mitigated through integrated, systemic safety strategies

COMMUNITY

Communication
Multi-directional, integrated: supporting collaboration, behaviour change, participation

Community participation
Communities understand their needs better than anyone else

Arts & culture
Opportunity to promote creativity, cohesion, agency, self-expression, demystifying the other

Public spaces
Cannot fulfil their purposes if not designed with safety in mind

HEALTHY & SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Safety
Reduced vulnerability, increased resilience and vibrance

Infrastructure
Problematic infrastructure often exacerbates unsafety

Maintenance
Poor maintenance exacerbates unsafety

Human settlements
How to deliver human settlements which are healthy, safe and conducive to well-being

DEVELOPMENT

Measuring impact
Complex indicators for complex outcomes

Local economic development
A systems approach enables sustainable impact

Access to opportunities
Access is a complex social phenomenon (like safety)

Crime prevention
Spend money on what we want more of, not what we want less of

Vibrant communities
Communities must be safe to be vibrant

WHY WOMEN?

A city that is safe for women and free from violence against women is a city that is safe for all. This vision of a safe city embodies feminist principles of inclusion, participation and social justice. It is a vibrant city.

Creativity

Have to be creative about navigating the City because of their unique experience of unsafety.

Community problem solvers who care for and solve the problems of the most vulnerable.

Women's specific needs

Sanitation (toilets)

Travel differently

Safety needs

Children's needs are women's needs.

All vulnerable people in communities' needs are women's needs.

Where women's lives are lived

Local government operates where women live, it has a unique opportunity to improve the lives of women.

Women's safety is community safety

Women are structurally excluded, if you intervene without an emphasis on women you are effectively excluding women. If you want to include women, you have to foreground their needs and experiences.

Ensure full participation

Directly including women themselves.

Due to the unequal burden of work of care, women tend to look after vulnerable groups such as children, elderly and others.

LOCAL LEVEL

It is only at **local level** that there can be both immediate and lasting change. Here women can experience a shift in their freedom of movement and therefore their citizenship; women can participate fully in planning, design and implementation of environmental solutions to unsafety.

SAFETY

Women are more likely to benefit from interventions that have an emphasis on **safety** rather than on security; their needs relate to the walkability and user-friendliness of their environment. For women, public transport, public toilets, sidewalks, lighting and the design of leisure spaces etc. make the difference between being able to participate in school, studies, work opportunities, opportunities for livelihoods and a full and rounded life, including social and familial activities, or simply having to stay home for fear of victimisation. None of these things is dependent on surveillance or even policing; all are about delivery of public services.

Crime and violence committed against women is most often described in terms of gender-based violence, while responses often focus on social and cultural norms and the legal framework, a safer cities approach focuses on a systemic approach to change. The city is uniquely positioned to intervene in a pragmatic way to elevate and respond to issues that make women unsafe in the urban environment. Perhaps even more important is the opportunity to **amplify women's voices** in seeking their collaboration in conducting **safety audits that reflect their needs and lived experiences** - and responding to findings and recommendations that are made.

When women are safer, when their respect and dignity is upheld, they are more engaged, active, self-sufficient, productive and able to participate fully and contribute in a vibrant and prosperous community.

WHAT IS THE PACKAGE ON OFFER?

The package comprises four integrated workstreams, interwoven to maximise the use of data for the safety of women as they navigate their environments.

Safetipin Technologies

Designed and developed to source and use lived experience data related to public spaces and routes. These technologies include a mobile app that can be used by women to conduct their own and crowd-sourced audits, as well as to consult the outcomes of audits to plan and use routes. Safetipin also conducts night audits and audits using public transport. All steps of implementation are undertaken, ensuring that everyone knows what their role is and why things are being done.

Communication Strategy

The package enables and relies on continuous feedback loops, engaging everyone in women's safety, and ensuring participation of women in creating safer cities. Materials include training manuals and facilitator guides, reports and posters.

Materials cover:

- Internal communication: the link between different mandates and women's safety
- Advocacy: prioritizing women's safety: public behaviour change, policy and strategy
- Feedback loops with users
- Improved relationships with users

Strategic Partnership Building and Management

The project takes a conscious and intentional approach to relationship building. Strengthened relationships are an explicit objective of the work and they come through pedantic relationship building between the implementing partners, the city and civil society actors. Space is created for shared accountability, in achieving common objectives. Alongside this approach is the commitment to enable everyone to be useful. Systemic action minimises duplication and competition, creates a culture of abundance and enables relationships that are mutually supportive.

A Learning Approach, Responsive and Adaptive

The package has evolved from an original set of tools that have been adapted and refined through experience and in response to the characteristics of a specific environment and time. The challenges of the last three years are a reminder of the uncertainty of the world, the impact of disruptions on our hopes and dreams and the need for flexibility and agility in working with social challenges.

THE
SAFE WOMEN SAFER CITIES
PACKAGE

Activating **inclusive** and **lived experience data** for **sustainable urban safety**

Safetipin Technologies

- Safety audit methodology
- Using data to improve city safety operations
- Recommendations for interventions
- Improved responsiveness
- Accountability framework
- Tool for women to improve their own safety

Communication Strategy

- Engagement with women
- Behaviour change: respect for women
- Advocacy: prioritising women's safety
- Feedback loop with users of the City
- Access to information: understanding safety
- Community participation
- Internal alignment of mandates and objectives

Strategic Partnership Building and Management

- Internal: transversal governance
- Leveraging civil society participation
- Leveraging shared resources
- Enabling everyone to be useful
- Integration enables systemic action, no duplication
- Collaboration, mutual support, shared success
- Institutionalisation of partnerships and collaboration

Capacity building and Learning

- Capacity building: improved safety expertise inside and outside the City
- Service delivery: prioritise City activities to respond to needs of the community
- Strategy: sustaining operations to enable women's safety
- Early warning
- Institutionalising data tools and methodologies
- Learning and knowledge management systems and tools
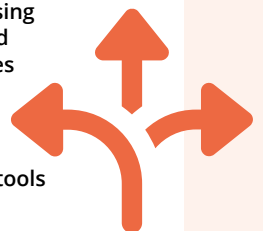
Focus on what we want more of

The parts of the package come together to offer:

- Lived-experience data reflecting the status of safety of women – and recommendations about how to maximise a safety lens on transversal mandated functions of the municipality.

- Demonstrate the impact of inclusive municipal mandates on women's safety.

- Highlight the link between services, infrastructure and safety.

- Tools and data for participation of women and integrating their experiences in city plans and priorities.

- Strengthen existing or emerging Safety Strategies with practical interventions that will improve women's safety.

- Enable visible responsiveness to women's needs.

- Shared accountability for safety.

- Integration with data sets, strategies, monitoring and evaluation.

- Practical recommendations for measurable remedial actions.

This package values perceptions and it foregrounds the lived experience of women. In the longer term, it provides a platform for an environment that is safe for women to access the services and opportunities that will contribute to a thriving, inclusive city.

No one of the four workstreams can transform on it own, it is the systemic intervention integrating them all, that can deliver sustainable impact.

SAFETY AUDITS

Why Safetipin?

Safetipin generates and mobilises data to complement official statistics and inspire action towards making cities safer for women and girls. The My Safetipin App generates data through interaction with users of the City. The data are used and analysed by users, City stakeholders, urban planners and civil society, to improve a shared understanding of safety and to plan responses to learning about unsafety in the City.

At the core of the Safetipin Apps is the safety audit, a participatory tool for collecting and assessing information on key parameters in a public space, including perceptions of safety. 8 key parameters are assessed for their impact on the perception of safety – lighting, walkability, public transport, visibility, openness, people, gender usage and security.
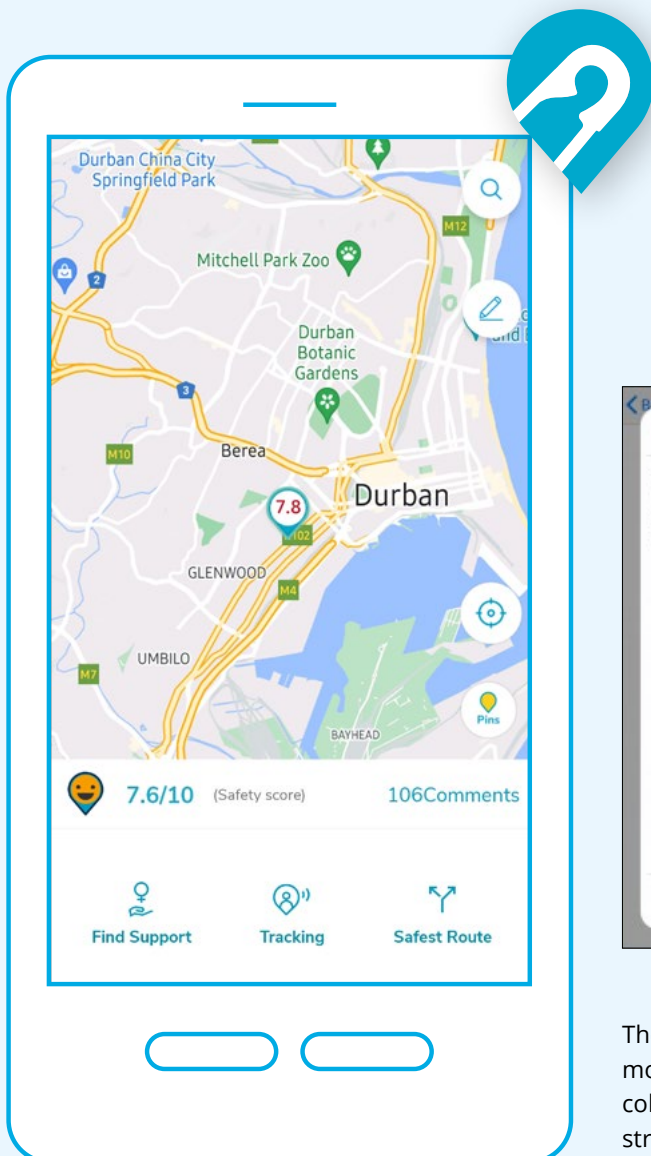
Safetipin Apps

a. Safetipin Nite: used to map the city's streets at night using photographs.
b. Safetipin Site: web application used to collate information on public places and public services.
c. My Safetipin App: smartphone application available to public for free on Google and Apple Playstore.
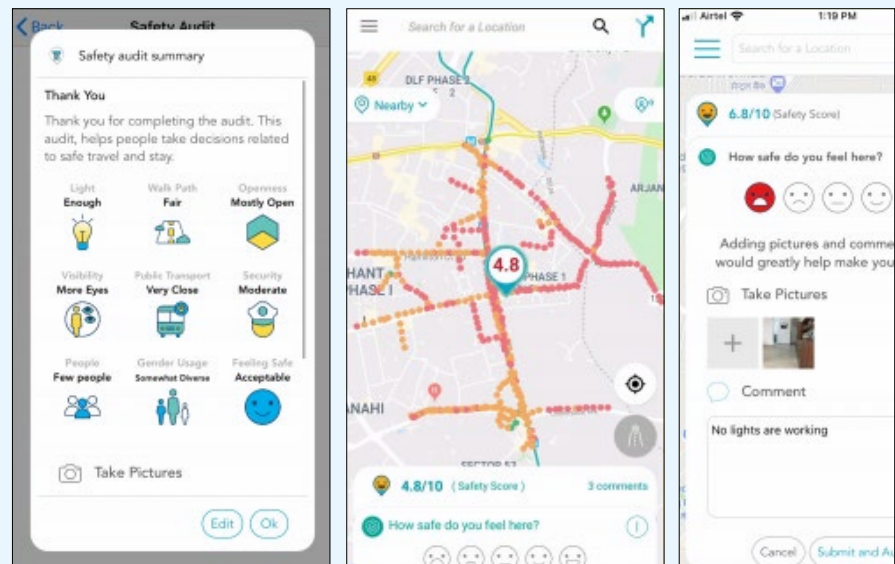
The data is accessible by all and can be interpreted and mobilized to support mandate-specific participation in a collective process aimed at improved understanding of and strengthened action to achieve safety.

COMMUNICATION

Communication Enables Sustainable Collaboration

Communication is essential to hope. The municipality doesn't necessarily have the trust of those who live in and use the city, yet it needs to shift attitudes and change behaviors in the community to encourage active citizenry in making change for the better.

My Safetipin offers women and users of the App an opportunity to be **aware of their environment**, to **express their perceptions of safety** and to **contribute to safety audits** by scoring a place according to their experience of it. The App enables users to understand their relationship with space and safety, to apply a safety lens and identify unsafe spaces and routes. To broaden the impact of the App, it is important that it's supported by behaviour change strategies to ensure that users do more.

The project relies on **communication to stimulate behaviour change** that will assist in making the city safe.

This aims to:

- Elevate the perceptions of women and the importance of their safety.
- Shift attitudes towards safety as a shared responsibility.
- Create an understanding of the links between infrastructure, maintenance, reliability, predictability, and safety of women in the city.
- Enable officials to view safety as a complex problem that requires collaboration and systemic interventions.
- Help those who vandalize infrastructure understand the impact on their own safety and the safety of their communities.
- Encourage community members to come forward with information about those who vandalize infrastructure.
- Promote the use of the App to enable more people to map their environments.

Other Communication Actions/ interventions include:

- Reporting progress regularly to municipal officials.
- Engage senior municipal officials.
- Publish principles, findings, recommendations, and responses generated by the project.
- Insinuating issues of women's dignity, safety and freedom of movement into municipal messaging.
- Engaging taxi drivers and public transit officials for better gender sensitivity. Disseminating materials about Safetipin and why/how to use it.
- Use of social media to promote the Safetipin approach.
- Convening meetings focused on responses to issues of women's unsafety.

THE STORY OF eTHEKWINI & WOMEN'S SAFETY

Why eThekwini?

eThekwini has partnered with UN-Habitat Safer Cities for more than 20 years, participating in and contributing to transformative safety narratives with evidence to action approaches, seeking interventions that deliver impact on the ground.

eThekwini Safer Cities was invited to participate as the host municipality because the project reflects the Safer Cities emphasis on data driven intervention, while there was a need to focus a gender lens on safety in the city.

The process

The project collaborated with two local partners, Ethembeni Crisis Care Centre (ECCC) and Gugu Dlamini Foundation (GDF)[1] to mobilise young women for data collection and community engagement. The project also collaborated with the National Taxi Association for data collection and engaging with taxi drivers, marshals, and commuters to help them understand how to make taxi ranks and the journey safer for women.

The project's life cycle encompasses the years of COVID, riots and devastating floods in Durban. As a result of these disruptors, the project had to be flexible and agile to achieve its set objectives. Relationships played a major role in determining whether such a project can actually survive.
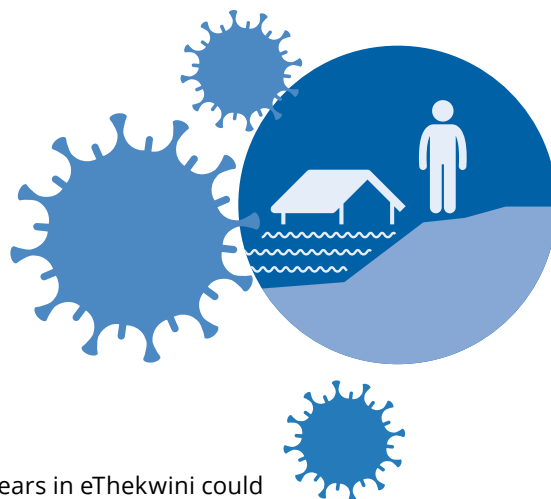
The work done over the past three years in eThekwini could not have been achieved without a deep commitment to communication and relationships.

Communication became paramount and the partners learned together to demonstrate respect and support for different experiences and needs, to build collective mindfulness and resilience.

This approach helped strengthen relationships at a time when many others were falling apart. The principles embedded into the communications protocols have become integral to the implementation of the whole project.
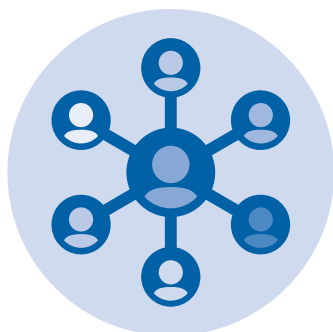
Communication also played an important role within the municipality, promoting understanding of the significance of collaboration for systemic change, where many felt that they didn't have a role to play in what they saw as combating crime or delivering security services. The team learned to take care in the words used, linking safety to mandates and roles as they are known to the specialist units, rather than words that apply in the language of safety and security. This also helps in identifying indicators that span the two spheres, finding terminology that works and carries value for both the implementing department and those whose objective is one of safety.

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[1] Community Based Organisations, which works with local structures to lead the community response to Gender-Based Violence prevention and mitigation.

Safetipin technologies: Tools used in eThekwini

Safetipin Nite

In Durban, around 56,700+ images were collected and analysed on a wide range of parameters and sub-parameters linked to safety and accessibility of public spaces[2].

Formative Research with Women

Formative research on experiences of young women using minibus taxis, buses and Metrorail services was conducted.

Safetipin Site

This tool was used to do a safety assessment at the taxi ranks and collect data about the condition of public toilets, last mile connectivity through train/bus etc.

My Safetipin App

The app was used to conduct more than 800 safety audits in five communities namely KwaMashu, KwaNdengezi, Phoenix, Nyuswa and Molweni.

[2] Refer to annexure 2 for a complete list

Interventions

Integration into the City's dashboard

It was extremely fortuitous that the Safetipin data was integrated into the city dashboard to make it more meaningful for city officials. The dashboard uses and analyses big data sets on crime and our data is on urban safety and is about perceptions and data gathered from city users. City administrations can access city-specific information collected through the applications and integrate them with existing city databases.

Senior women officials are trained and encouraged to use the App to break stereotypes about which demographics are deemed unsafe. This will also encourage accountability within the municipality.

Training of senior women officials in the municipality to use My Safetipin

Taxi drivers sensitization workshops

Materials were developed in partnership with the two local partner organisations on gender sensitivity for the workshopping of ETA's facilitators and the taxi drivers. In addition to the workshops, posters have been developed for use at the taxi rank to strengthen the work done through the workshops and to encourage use of the App.

Messages were developed to shift behaviour amongst municipal officials, taxi associations and community members. **Communication Plan**

Events
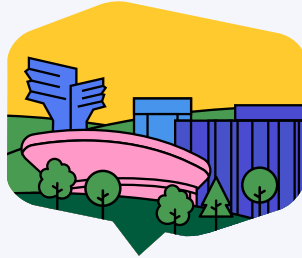
World Urban Forum: 26 – 30 June 2022

The project was presented at a side event on the 29th of June 2022 at the World Urban Forum in Poland. The side event focused on use of data to strengthen city safety strategies in eThekwini municipality.

Colloquium on the Safety of Women in Cities in South Africa
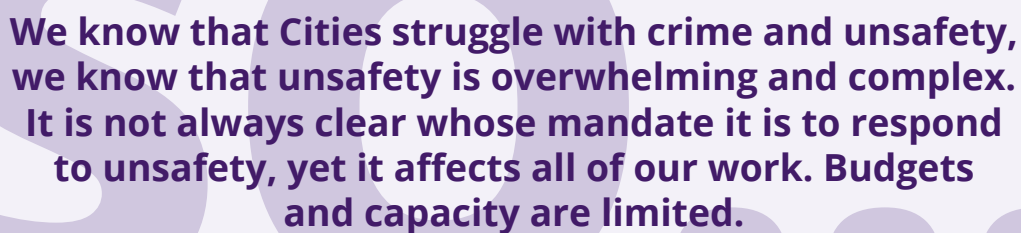

eThekwini municipality co-hosted a collaborative event to explore ways to expand and institutionalise the value of the project. The Mayor of eThekwini Cllr Mxolisi Kaunda welcomed partners including South African Cities Network and participants including representatives from Msunduzi municipality, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South African Local Government Association, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, Metro police, Community Based Organisations, South African National Taxi Council and eThekwini municipality.

The Safetipin Audit Report was handed to the Mayor. The mayor emphasized the importance of shifting cultural and behavioural norms as one of the tools for improving safety for women. Lively discussion followed, with some key themes:

- A need for a women's charter that can be incorporated into the Integrated Development Plan to ensure that budgets respond to gender issues.
- This approach should be institutionalised for sustainability.
- Budgets should be based on reliable data.
- Capacity building to improve safety expertise in the municipality.
- Continuity and sustainability are essential, and funding should extend beyond typically constrained budget cycles.
- Integration must extend beyond the municipal across spheres of provincial and national government.

It was agreed that the Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE) should be approached to partner in developing a safety curriculum that focuses on the links between municipal mandates and the safety of women, as well as urban safety as a whole.

SO...

We know that Cities struggle with crime and unsafety, we know that unsafety is overwhelming and complex. It is not always clear whose mandate it is to respond to unsafety, yet it affects all of our work. Budgets and capacity are limited.

In this context, access the Safe Women Safer Cities package and team to:

- Assist with identifying stakeholders inside and outside the municipality who should be your partners;

- Support analysis of the IDP and other plans and policies to identify opportunities for integration and leveraging existing budgets and programmes;

- Co-facilitate internal and external engagement on women's safety in your City;

- Support the development of a project to mobilise the Safetipin technologies and the Safer Cities Safer Women package to understand women's safety better in your City;

- Build a communications strategy to ensure alignment, participation, shared success both internally in the City and externally with the public;

- Conduct capacity building with officials and other stakeholders to understand the principles of women's safety and the use of data to support improved planning;

- Co-conduct the Safetipin safety audit with citizens of your City;

- Analyze the findings of the safety audit and deliver recommendations on actions to respond to the learning;

- Support implementation of interventions to improve safety conditions.

Outcomes:

- Relationships with City Departments and officials which are supportive of your mandate and of improving women's safety.

- Reports on the status of safety, both in the City itself and in the policy framework of the City.

- Behaviour change communications materials.

- A Safetipin dashboard for ongoing use by the City.

- A safety audit.

- Recommendations and reports on analysis of the safety audit.

- Improved skills and understanding of safety as a transversal mandate in the City.

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