

# Gender gaps in water management: a case study and Pilot Project in Mukuru Kwanjenga Slums, Nairobi Kenya

Name of the presenter: **Eng. Jokastah Kalungu**

Organization: **Small Water Service Providers- Kenya (SWAPAK) / Climate Action for Women and Vulnerable Communities - Kenya (CAWOVS – Kenya)**

Contact: [jwanzuu@yahoo.com](mailto:jwanzuu@yahoo.com), [climateactionforvulnerable@gmail.com](mailto:climateactionforvulnerable@gmail.com),  
[jokastahkalungu@gmail.com](mailto:jokastahkalungu@gmail.com)

**Global South Academic Conclave on WASH and Climate 2025**

21st - 23rd February 2025, Ahmedabad

**CWAS** CENTER  
FOR WATER  
AND SANITATION  
**CRDF** CEPT  
UNIVERSITY

**CEPT**  
UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY  
OF PLANNING

Gates Foundation

**viega** foundation

# Introduction

- ❖ Mukuru Kwa Njega – Second largest slum in Nairobi County
- ❖ Largest being Kibera Slum
- ❖ Population of 30 villages and is home to over 527,526–825,000 people, living in 193,539 households and occupying 52.5 sq., km of land
- ❖ About 60% of Nairobi's population live in slums. These slums cover only 5% of the city's land
- ❖ Other slums – Kawangware, Mathare, Kangemi, Lungalunga among others

- ✓ **Challenges** - Overcrowding, underserved, inadequate infrastructure, unemployment, idleness, inadequate and limited basic services and poverty.
- ✓ These conditions resulted in the proliferation of water cartels / gangs/ mafias, illegal water connections and minimized community participation and or ownership of water services



# Driving forces in Slums - CBOs

- ❖ Addressing the fundamental need for clean water in a global context
- ❖ Integrating measures that empower communities, address gender gaps and issues
- ❖ Improve health, and stimulate economic activities,
- ❖ Contributing to groundwork for sustainable poverty reduction and attain SDG 3, 6 and 13

# Objectives

- ❖ The long-term objectives is not only the provision of water services but in fostering resilience despite the impacts of climate change through community engagement for improved Water Use efficiency
- ❖ Mainstreaming gender, self-reliance, and community-led development initiatives
- ❖ Aligning with poverty reduction goals by empowering local communities through institutional strengthening and collaboration with Key Water Sector Institutions
- ❖ Engaging with Key stakeholders - Athi Water Works Development Agency – AWWDA, Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company (NCWSC); Water Services Regulatory Services – WASREB among other stakeholders on behalf and for the benefit of local community

# Project Area Information

- ❖ For many decades, Mukuru kwanjenga slum residents were held hostage by dangerous water cartels gangs and mafias
- ❖ These organized “well protected” group of people controlled water services amidst outcry by the residents
- ❖ These team were christened/nicknamed with peculiar names as a form of scaring the residents
- ❖ Being an illegal business, many benefitted from the proceeds of water sales wired in their mobile phones every month.
- ❖ As a result of unemployment and joblessness, poverty, many young people were employed and low paid to man the water stands where were strategically located right inside the villages some even a few meters away from vandalized funded water kiosks

- ❖ They control water services in these villages selling water very expensive, for example a 20 liter jerrican of water selling at BETWEEN 0.15505 USD to 0.77525 USD
- ❖ Those desiring to venture into the water selling business in these villages would pay in between 387 USD to 775 USD per connection and access an illegal “*protected and guarded*” water connections mostly done at night using poor and sub standard materials
- ❖ The Gang - took advantage of the innocent girls and young women luring them for sex in exchange of free water services
- ❖ These phenomena caused untold suffering, family separations, Increased Gender Based Violence, teenage pregnancies, poverty, school drop outs, etc – Extremely alarming scenarios
- ❖ The Non-revenue Water went up as high as 80% as a result of illegal water connections which were often done at night and the substandard pipes laid along drainage and sewer systems potentially causing water contamination leading to outbreak of water borne diseases such as cholera, typhoid etc.

# Methodology

## Interventions and Gender Equality/Equity And Inclusivity

- ❖ Efforts to change and transform lives in Mukuru Kwanjenga slum residents started at a small scale – **Moto/Slogan - *leaving no one behind***
- ❖ Mobilization/Engagement/Registration/Data collection – Stakeholders -The Community members were mobilised, engaged, capacity build to own water services in their respective villages
- ❖ The project involved fully mobilizing, engaging, and empowering communities to take ownership of water services and infrastructure in their localities
- ❖ Process – friendly community water dialogues, advocacy meetings tailored by creative art (mural development) and active planning WASH processes with a goal of promoting the establishment of Delegated Volunteer Community Water Working Groups – DVCWWGs in the informal settlements
- ❖ Fortnight meetings to strategize on ensuring that the community members took ownership of the process were facilitated



# Methodology

## Interventions and Gender Equality/Equity And Inclusivity

- ❖ Efforts to change and transform lives in Mukuru Kwanjenga slum residents started at a small scale – **Moto/Slogan - *leaving no one behind***
- ❖ Mobilization/Engagement/Registration/Data collection – Stakeholders -The Community members were mobilised, engaged, empowered to own water services in their respective villages
- ❖ The project involved fully mobilizing, engaging, and empowering communities to take ownership of water services and infrastructure in their localities
- ❖ Process – friendly community water dialogues, advocacy meetings tailored by creative art (mural development) and active planning WASH processes with a goal of promoting the establishment of Delegated Volunteer Community Water Working Groups – DVCWWGs in the informal settlements



# Methodology

## Interventions and Gender Equality/Equity And Inclusivity

- ❖ A community-driven **Water Justice Team** was formed with an open membership that includes women, youth, persons with disabilities, schools, religious groups, village elders, water service providers, and media representatives.
- ❖ Through AWARENESS CAMPAIGN - Water cartels felt/encouraged the NEED TO align and commenced transformation and legalization of their water operations; the Company (NCWSC) constructed water chambers where everyone in need of water connections (slot) could apply for water meters including Women Led Groups and Organizations, Institutions, structure owners, special groups, youth, with affordable Water Application Fees
- ❖ For Water Service Delivery Accountability And Sustainability, the members of the community proposed **aerially piped system visible to everyone.**

# Results- Impacts

- ❖ Cases of gender based violence, teenage pregnancies, school drop outs went down, showcasing new found ownership
- ❖ The project model used fostered community involvement, ensuring sustainability, and preventing misuse of water infrastructure
- ❖ A memorable incident involving a woman accidentally damaging a water pipe becomes a testament to the project's impact - Instead of blame, the community took collective responsibility, ensuring she contributed to the repair costs transparently at the police station. This story exemplifies how community engagement fosters accountability and turns challenges into opportunities for positive change
- ❖ Additionally, the project influenced policies at Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company (NCWSC) to adopt the construction of low-cost water chambers and laying of water pipeline on the surface or aerially. These two innovative low-cost strategic components form part of the community water ownership strategic interventions and are currently being implemented in Mukuru Kwanjenga informal settlements in collaboration with the NCWSC.

## Results- Impacts

- ❖ Significant reduction of water cartels / mafias / gangs and their illegal water connections and vandalism activities
- ❖ Non-revenue water went down to 15% prompting the company (NCWSC) to open a branch water office as a result of an uptake of revenue collection;
- ❖ *Free water for sex* phenomena went down drastically, women and young girls applied for water and were recruited to sit in the water justice teams and meetings
- ❖ Community Led Teams championed for access to safe, clean, affordable reliable drinking water, own water services and foster a strong sense of ownership and responsibility within the community

# Innovation

- ❖ Our innovative community ownership of water services approach addresses a crucial gap overlooked by many different stakeholders and partners including the Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company when designing and implementing water projects.
- ❖ The strategy, demonstrated successfully in Mukuru slums, goes beyond public participation to establish community water structures entitled **Volunteer Water Justice Teams**
- ❖ The existence of low cost water chambers, laying of water pipeline on the surface or aerially addressing the water cartel menace, illegal water connections and other Non-revenue water (NRW) contributors
- ❖ Effective management and control was easier in the slums through these approaches, blended with community ownership - Brought Tangible, Measurable and Vividly Results

# Innovation

- ❖ Community water dialogues - build trust and accountability
- ❖ Incorporated **Interventions** to Creative Arts creating - Long Lasting Impact.
- ❖ Stakeholders in this CONCLAVE, the intervention and innovation can be replicated in your respective countries OR join forces as partners to scale up our programs in other slums in KENYA and BEYOND.
- ❖ **Other Opportunities for Collaborations:** Community Solar Water Solutions, Community Boreholes, Rainwater Harvesting, Climate-adaptive WASH, Policy Reforms, Nature-based Conservation, Ecosan, IWRM, Climate Smart agriculture, Environment conservation, Urban Agriculture, Agroforestry, **Ecosan Sanitation Solutions** and Gender-inclusive Governance.

# Our vision

Water for All, Women for  
Climate Action Across All  
Development Sectors

[jwanzuu@yahoo.com](mailto:jwanzuu@yahoo.com),

[climateactionforvulnerable@gmail.com](mailto:climateactionforvulnerable@gmail.com),

[jokastahkalungu@gmail.com](mailto:jokastahkalungu@gmail.com)

Phone: +254734153970, +254712625546

[www.linkedin.com/in/eng-jokastah-w-kalungu-phd-10777528](https://www.linkedin.com/in/eng-jokastah-w-kalungu-phd-10777528)







## Global South Academic Conclave on WASH and Climate 2025

**CWAS** CENTER FOR WATER AND SANITATION  
**CRDF** CEPT UNIVERSITY

**CEPT UNIVERSITY**  
FACULTY OF PLANNING

**BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation**

**viega foundation**