

Using forensic science to tackle sexual violence

June 7 2018



Credit: University of Leicester

Researchers from the University of Leicester are using forensic DNA to help tackle sexual violence in humanitarian contexts—such as remote locations, displaced communities, conflict and post-conflict situations.

The team has recently been awarded a grant from Elrha's Humanitarian Innovation Fund to use [forensic science](#) to support investigations and prosecutions in cases of [sexual violence](#), working with a range of international partner organisations.

The project has been a collaborative effort with colleagues from the University of Leicester's Departments of Criminology, and Genetics and Genome Biology working together to develop innovative solutions to make forensic science accessible to a variety of humanitarian contexts.

Dr. Lisa Smith from the University of Leicester's Department of Criminology said: "This funding will enable us to further build on our international partnerships, and gather data from stakeholders about the barriers to forensic science in Kenya and the feasibility and complex legal issues relating to innovation in this area.

"This work has the potential to be of great benefit to victims of [sexual violence](#), communities, and the legal system in Kenya and beyond by enhancing access to justice and overcoming the impunity that currently exists in many jurisdictions globally."

Professor Mark Jobling from the University of Leicester's Department of Genetics and Genome Biology added: "DNA analysis is used routinely in the UK and other developed countries, and we take it for granted as a tool that provides key evidence in cases of sexual violence. In much of the world, unfortunately, that's not the case. It's exciting to be working on a project that aims to put that right by making cutting-edge DNA profiling methods available in Kenya, and ultimately in other parts of Africa and the developing world."

Sexual violence has devastating impacts on millions of victims worldwide, and is notoriously difficult to investigate and prosecute. In humanitarian emergencies, victims are often unable to access justice and

perpetrators are not identified and held accountable, commonly due to a lack of physical evidence to support prosecutions.

The project is supported by Elrha's Humanitarian Innovation Fund programme, a grant-making facility supporting organisations and individuals to identify, nurture and share innovative and scalable solutions to the most pressing challenges facing effective humanitarian assistance.

More information: Project webpage: www.elrha.org/map-location/sel...-of-sexual-violence/

Provided by University of Leicester

Citation: Using forensic science to tackle sexual violence (2018, June 7) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-06-forensic-science-tackle-sexual-violence.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--