

These organisations are using WhatsApp to make a difference

 By [Emily Stander](#)

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On 10 May 2021, 10 organisations were selected as the finalists of the first Chat for Impact Summit.



Source: www.unsplash.com

In partnership with Praekelt.org and Turn.io, WhatsApp hosted the four-day virtual event to bring together 30 organisations doing work to specifically address supporting communities around the world.

"We believe that WhatsApp, in partnership with civil society, can help people get the critical information and support they need quickly and practically," said Will Cathcart, head of WhatsApp. "When we decided to support Chat for Impact, our mission was to help further the important work of social impact organisations, and through Chat for Impact, organisations like yours now have the resources and know-how to launch services that will lead to new ways of providing support and extending your mission-driven work to the communities who need it most."

The finalists joined the Chat for Impact Accelerator, where each of them received \$50,000 in funding, mentoring, training, and support from WhatsApp and Turn.io to launch their impact chatbots effectively. These chatbots aim to enhance their mission to speak for social justice issues and advance social justice and equality. The focus of these projects ranges from giving people access to knowledge and education to LGBTQIA+ support, and healthy sex education.

These are the 10 finalists, and the results that came from the four-month programme to develop their chatbots:

Digify Africa

Using WhatsApp as a platform, [Digify Africa](#) brings forward Lesedi, a DigiBot, to help low-income young Africans build their digital literacy and access work and training opportunities they possibly did not have access to before. The bot is dynamic and has quizzes and assessments, an immersive UX, and deep analytics, amongst other features, to help the youth of Africa gain access to information and resources they may not have had before.

Ladysmith

Cosa du Mujeres, created by [Ladysmith Collective](#), uses WhatsApp to connect women in Columbia to the services they need and also generates actionable data about gender-based violence. Women are connected with existing services that prevent and respond to gender-based violence. When women send a WhatsApp message, they are presented with solutions and resources to deal with the issues that they may be facing.



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Mobile Pathways

Abogada, created by [Mobile Pathways](#), is a legal monitoring system that helps with issues related to immigrants who are struggling with legal issues. Through entering your case number, Abogada assists in sending information about your case, like hearing date and location, and monitors your hearing - sending alerts when anything changes. You are also able to ask questions, and you will receive videos that answer these questions. This is in an effort to help immigrants feel prepared for the complex immigration systems that exist in some countries, like the USA.

Reach52

In an effort to connect people around the world to essential healthcare services, [Reach52](#) provides a platform where a network of agents and public-private sector partnerships enable healthcare services in low-connectivity markets.

WhatsApp is central to this idea as the digital platform that actively connects users to health advice and on-the-ground services. Through this, you are able to get advice, symptoms of specific conditions, and recommendations on what you might need to do next. You are also able to access screenings for conditions like hypertension and diabetes, and access medicines and health insurance plans.

SameSame

Navigating adolescence can be a challenging task, but it can be especially difficult for young people who are questioning their sexual orientation and gender identity. In some countries, support for this can be dangerous to access - if it is even possible at all.

Created by a queer collective from the Global South, SameSame aims to provide a safe space for queer youth. Through the widespread availability of WhatsApp, and the app's end-to-end encryption, the user experience of SameSame is intrinsically designed to protect the identity of those who use it. SameSame provides mental health questionnaires that assist in directing them to the content they need, and users are able to engage with doctors, lawyers, and therapists through scheduled live chats.

StrongMinds

[StrongMinds](#) aims to put good mental health at the fingertips of African women. Using an evidence-based and cost-effective group therapy model, StrongMinds looks to provide access to care that women in Africa might not have had before. Amani is the chatbot that users can wield for this resource. Amani aims to normalise feelings of depression, provides education about depression, and connects people with the professional help they need. Routed in science, Amani aims to make a big impact with little data consumption.

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Talk2U

Sex education is imperative to a healthy sex life, especially for women who are just starting out in their sexual journeys. Consent and setting boundaries are at the centre of this. This chatbot aims to help young women in these journeys, and provides a safe space for them to have conversations around setting boundaries, understanding consent, and establishing healthy relationships. Through Paolla, a fictional character who speaks to users about her struggles and insecurities, [Talk2U](#) hopes that this will allow users to also help themselves while they help Paolla.

Voices of Venezuela

With limited access to internet being an issue for up to 95% of Venezuelan immigrants, the migrant community created a solution to help issues immigrants may face. Using WhatsApp as a platform, migrants are able to ask any questions they have and help get access to services they may need. Through the use of familiar language, [Voices of Venezuela](#) allows users to understand complicated integrational processes they may come across.

Vote.org

[Vote.org](#) looks toward technology to simplify political engagement, increase voter turnout, and strengthen the American democracy. The bilingual chatbot aims to bring trusted voter information to those who need it. This is meant to make access to information easier for Latina citizens, and those who need easier access to information regarding the voting process. Through the intentional use of keywords, Vote.org can help users find answers to even the most complex questions easily.

Worldreader

The BookSmart WhatsApp solution by [Worldreader](#) aims to bring higher literacy to bottom of pyramid homes and classrooms, globally. Users can find resources, guidance and support for reading to their children. Through an engaging library and access to related home activities, BookSmart hopes to help with reading support and comprehension, as well as provide better outcomes for those who possibly do not have access to these kinds of resources elsewhere.



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Turn.io, in partnership with WhatsApp and Praekelt.org , are looking to expand their reach through bootcamps to support social organisations around the world. For more information, go [here](#).

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

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