



FROM PIXELS TO POWER

An Aid to
Navigating Online
Spaces Fearlessly and
Safely



Digital spaces have transformed the way we communicate and engage with the world. However, they have also become breeding grounds for various forms of violence against young women. Over the years, more so with the increased use of digital spaces during the Covid-19 pandemic and the popularization of interactive and live social media platforms and Artificial Intelligence (AI), there has been an alarming rise of gender-based violence (GBV) and harassment in online environments.

This document outlines recommended measures and guidelines to support young women to navigate online spaces safely and fearlessly. The proposed measures include promoting body positivity, enhancing digital literacy, creating safe spaces, and establishing policies and reporting mechanisms to counter online violence.

The guide highlights the collaborative nature of these efforts, emphasizing joint engagement for a holistic approach among communities offline and online. It can be valuable for designing online/digital safety programmes and advocacy initiatives and for use by young women and girls to ensure their online safety.

Acknowledgements

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The panellists were, in alphabetical order:

- **Hadeer Gamal Al Sobki**, *Young Woman Leader and Women's Rights Activist - Egypt*
- **Harriet Kajoko**, *Gender Advisor, YWCA South Sudan - South Sudan*
- **Hebbat Allah Magdy**, *Young Woman Leader and Women's Rights Activist - Egypt*
- **Johnstone Kuya (Dr)**, *Senior Policy Advisor for Strategic Partnerships, Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands - Kenya*
- **Night Agnes Wani**, *Young Woman Leader and Women's Rights Activist - South Sudan*
- **Scholastica K. Kaaria (Prof)**, *Gender Specialist, MicroSave Consulting - East and Southern Africa*

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How can young women support each other and counter violence online?

1. Develop Awareness Networks

- Establish a network for disseminating information and creating awareness about online violence.

2. Supportive Online Behavior

- Refrain from engaging in online body shaming.
- Stand up for victims and build a strong counter-attack team against online harassment.

3. Education and Information Sharing

- Educate each other on avoiding sharing personal details on social media.
- Share information on reducing vulnerability online.
- Promote digital literacy skills, including critical thinking, fact-checking, and privacy protection among peers.

4. Peer Groups and Support

- Form peer groups for ongoing support.
- Provide moral support to survivors.
- Establish networks or communities as support systems for those facing online violence.

5. Sharing Experiences and Advice

- Share experiences and advice for navigating the digital world.
- Encourage reporting incidents to authorities and provide support, working with existing reporting structures.

6. Awareness Reels and Hotlines

- Create awareness through social media posts, videos and reels, sharing hotline numbers for online violence helplines.

7. Campaigns and Celebrations

- Participate in campaigns against online violence.
- Highlight and celebrate women who have successfully navigated online spaces despite challenges.

8. Safe Spaces Online

- Establish safe spaces online for young women.
- Create awareness about online violence and provide platforms for sharing experiences, seeking support, and discussing strategies to combat online violence, including information on referral mechanisms and psychological support.



What can civil society organisations (CSOs) do to enhance body positivity and combat violence violence?

1. Promote Positive Role Models

- Advocate for positive role models who are comfortable in their bodies, regardless of size or race.
- Be positive role models who inspire young girls to embrace and appreciate their bodies just as they are.

2. Education and Awareness

- Build digital literacy starting at a basic level for young children navigating digital spaces.
- Initiate education programmes emphasizing body uniqueness and rejecting societal beauty standards.
- Encourage self-acceptance and discourage comparisons with others.

3. Create Safe Spaces

- Establish safe spaces for open discussions on body-related issues without judgment.
- Provide guidance and facilitate positive self-esteem through respectful conversations.

4. Reporting and Blocking Tools

- Establish channels for young women to report incidents and offer helplines to support victims of online violence.
- Use reliable virtual tools to identify and report individuals or accounts involved in harassment.

- Empower young women to take control of their online experiences by advising them to block social media accounts that engage in harassment.

5. Community Guidelines and Media Responsibility

- Develop community guidelines for respectful online behaviour.
- Create frameworks discouraging body shaming on online platforms.
- Educate and advocate for media practitioners to stop promoting biased or harmful beauty standards.

6. Body Image Experts and Support

- Engage body image experts to help build self-esteem in young girls.
- Facilitate support groups among the young for discussions about self-worth.

7. Media Literacy Programmes

- Encourage robust media literacy programs for analyzing language harmful to self-esteem.
- Provide continuous education on media literacy for navigating media portrayals.

8. Collaborative Partnerships

- Collaborate with other NGOs and institutions to build girls' self-esteem.
- Provide counselling and psychological support for those affected by body shaming and gender-based violence.

9. Parental Involvement

- Build capacities of parents to affirm reassurance about their daughters' bodies and self-esteem.
- Involve parents in promoting positive body image and mental well-being.



10. Awareness and Advocacy Campaigns

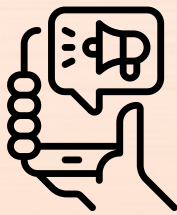
- Conduct regular awareness and advocacy campaigns against online violence on social media platforms.
- Encourage self-love and acceptance among young girls and young women.

11. Engage Tech Companies

- Collaborate with social media and tech companies for platforms free from online violence.
- Advocate for technology or algorithms to identify and remove abusive content.

12. Data Collection and Global Collaboration

- Collect quantifiable data showcasing the magnitude of online violence.
- Support the data with research to attract global attention to issues of online violence.



What actions can governments take to mitigate online violence, and what should we advocate for?

1. Government-Civil Society Collaboration

- Collaborate with civil society to combat GBV and online violence.
- Support and finance digital literacy and education programmes for young women.
- Provide financial support for initiatives addressing the psychological impact on women and girls.

2. Addressing Root Causes

- Investigate and address the root causes and underlying societal issues of online violence.
- Involve diverse stakeholders, including men, boys, political leaders, religious leaders, and the private sector (including technology companies), to develop mechanisms to identify and remove abusive content online.

3. Collaborative Efforts and Social Security:

- Collaborate across sectors and encourage global collaboration and international solidarity to develop digital safety frameworks and toolkits.
- Strengthen collaboration to establish social security measures.
- Work with the police to ensure justice for victims and track perpetrators.

4. Legislation and Policies

- Implement and enforce legislation to prevent online violence.
- Establish helplines to provide assistance and support for young women facing online violence.
- Clearly communicate reporting mechanisms and raise awareness, especially among women, about cyberbullying and online harassment.

5. Effective Policy Dissemination and Implementation

- Develop policies enabling people to report incidents.
- Disseminate policies through channels such as school forums and universities.
- Emphasize that having policies is insufficient; ensure their effective implementation and enforcement.

6. Advocacy and Representation:

- Ensure meaningful representation of young women in decision-making platforms addressing online violence.
- Participate in discussions on establishing effective reporting mechanisms.





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