



Concept Note - UNFPA x SVRI

Making All Spaces Safe: Safe Technology for GBV response

Date: Thursday, 22nd September 2022

Timeframe: 18:30 - 20:00

Background

In the context of an increasingly digital society, the way in which people communicate, work, learn, produce, consume and access services and information is being radically transformed. These structural changes have been accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic as a consequence of reduced face-to-face interactions.

Technological innovation and digitalization have provided a window of opportunity for increased accessibility, availability and quality of service provision, including provision of gender-based violence (GBV) interventions. However, it is critical to acknowledge that these emerging spaces are also providing increased opportunities for gender-based violence. In fact, research estimates suggest that at least 38 per cent of women and girls globally have experienced online violence,¹ and this rate is even higher among younger women: 58 per cent of young women and adolescents aged 15 to 25 have been harassed online.²

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is working towards increased visibility of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TF GBV) through the mobilization of the bodyright campaign which is seeking to end image-based abuse³ as well as strengthened data, response systems and prevention of TF GBV, including through the use of innovative technology tools and approaches.

A fundamental way in which TF GBV must be addressed is through ensuring that online spaces and technologies, and particularly those intended for GBV service provision, are safe by design. The principle of 'Safety by Design' is used in technology development as a primary prevention mechanism, to anticipate and mitigate risk and harm before it occurs. 'Safety by Design' links directly to and operationalizes the GBV 'Do No Harm' principle into safe technology solutions.

While many of the efforts to develop and use innovative technologies for GBV service provision are well intentioned, not all of them ensure the safety of women and girls or are built upon a survivor centered approach. Given that inherently male dominated technology industry and the consequent design of

¹ Economist Intelligence Unit (2021). Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women. Available at: <https://onlineviolencewomen.eiu.com/>

² Plan International (2020). Free to Be Online? Girls' and young women's experiences of online harassment. Available at: <https://plan-international.org/publications/freetobeonline>

³ UNFPA, <https://www.unfpa.org/bodyright>



technologies which are non-inclusive, it is essential that GBV practitioners are aware of and can navigate these spaces in a way that ensures ethics, safety, and privacy are integrated into GBV tech-based interventions from the onset and integrated throughout the intervention. Careful consideration needs to be given to safety and ethical standards, including regard for and enforcement of both GBV guiding principles and survivor-centered approaches as well as data protection principles. In order to provide the support for the safe and ethical design, implementation and monitoring of technologies for GBV, UNFPA have developed and launched the *Guidance on the Use of Technology to Address Gender-based Violence and Harmful Practices*.

In order to ensure safety by design and survivor-centeredness of technology solutions for GBV service provision and other technology products, engagement with a range of stakeholders is critical, including non-traditional stakeholders such as the business and technology sector.

Purpose

Given the ever-increasing role of technology in GBV interventions, including response and prevention activities as well as data collection, this event seeks to provide the space for the sharing of experience, learnings, research, best practices and tools to maintain safety by design in the development of technologies to address GBV. The opportunity will also be used to launch the *UNFPA Guidance on the Use of Technology to Address Gender-based Violence and Harmful Practices*.

In addition to providing this platform for the sharing of research and information on best practices and tools for safe and ethical use of technology to provide GBV services, the event will also speak to the role of GBV providers in ensuring, protecting and advocating for safety by design in technology products.

Specific objectives

- Ensure a common understanding of the issues resulting from digital and online technologies, including those specifically designed to address GBV.
- To provide a platform for learning and cross-fertilization of experience shared by GBV practitioners and researchers on how technology can be used to reduce, address and prevent GBV.
- Launch the UNFPA Guidance on Use of Technology to Address Gender-based Violence and Harmful Practices

Format/Agenda

Welcome remarks

Alexandra Robinson to welcome and moderate the event

- a. [UNFPA Opening remarks](#): “The proliferation of tech solutions to address GBV: From “Move Fast Break Things” to Safety by Design. Building on the example of GBVIMS.” - Alexandra Robinson
- b. [Survivor story](#) as example - Recorded/Read story depending on time
Survivor/activist story that illustrates how an offline GBV incident can turn into online GBV if poorly designed and managed by GBV service providers. This story speaks to bad tech design (incident database) and how a harm can be exponentially amplified with digital responses.

Part I. What is the problem?

The first part of the event will emphasize the importance of gender-sensitive approaches when developing technology solutions for GBV service provision. It will emphasize the consequences of the lack of gender-sensitivity (i.e. infiltration of bad actors, use of good technology to perpetrate harm) and link back to the root causes (structural inequality in technology design).

This part of the event will seek to answer the questions:

- How can technology be harmful when it is designed to do good (in GBV response for example)?
- Why is technology not inherently safe by design? How does this affect GBV survivors that seek support through technology solutions?
- Why is using tech solutions for GBV so different from other uses of technology?
- What are the consequences of lack of “safety by design” in technology and digital platforms designed as part of a GBV intervention?
- Who are the bad actors and how do they infiltrate GBV technology solutions?

1. Keynote: Good intentions and bad outcomes: the need for gender-sensitive technology solutions for GBV - Eva Hartshorn-Sanders

Part II. (A part of) the solution: developing tools for safe and ethical use of technology.

1. E-Safety Commissioner - pre recorded video on safety by design in tech solutions.
2. Elizabeth Dartnall - “Using technology to address GBV: types and effectiveness of apps”
3. Stephanie Mikkelson, UNFPA - Launch of the guidelines for safe and ethical use of technology.
4. Workshop on safe use of technology for GBV programming - Led by Stephanie Mikkelson

Discussions will seek to collectively answer the following:

- Why is it important for GBV practitioners to get involved when technology solutions for GBV are being developed and implemented?



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- How can GBV practitioners productively and confidently engage with technologists and tech policy actors when it comes to developing and implementing tech solutions for GBV?
- How can we ensure that GBV practitioners are heard in a male-dominated tech field when tech solutions for GBV are being developed?
- What should be our collective priorities at the intersection of technology and GBV?

Logistics

In person and hybrid panelists, with pre-recorded videos.