



Gov-X Innovation Challenge 2021

PROBLEM STATEMENT: ONLINE GBV

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Online GBV in Africa



Background:

Founder of Popcorn Training – now a **KnowBe4** company.

•BA, CISSP, CISA, ISO 27001 Lead Auditor & Implementer, Business Analyst, (ex)PCI DSS QSA, (ex) CIPP/IT

•Women in Tech Innovations Throughout Africa 2020 WINNER: Southern and Central Africa

•Featured in **Top 50 Women in Cyber Africa**

•Featured in **Top 100 Women in Cyber 2020** by Cyber Defense Magazine

•ISACA South Africa **President Award 2020**





GovX Challenges

1. Help victims of cybercrime & prevent cybercrime
2. Raise cyber awareness amongst citizens and communities
3. **Help victims of online gender-based violence & prevent online gender-based violence**

Find innovative approaches & solutions for organizations such as SA's Cyber Security Hub (CERT) -

www.cybersecurityhub.gov.za



Online GBV?

Lines are blurred between online and offline

- Hacking
- Impersonation
- Surveillance / Stalking
- Harassment
- Recruitment
- Malicious Distribution

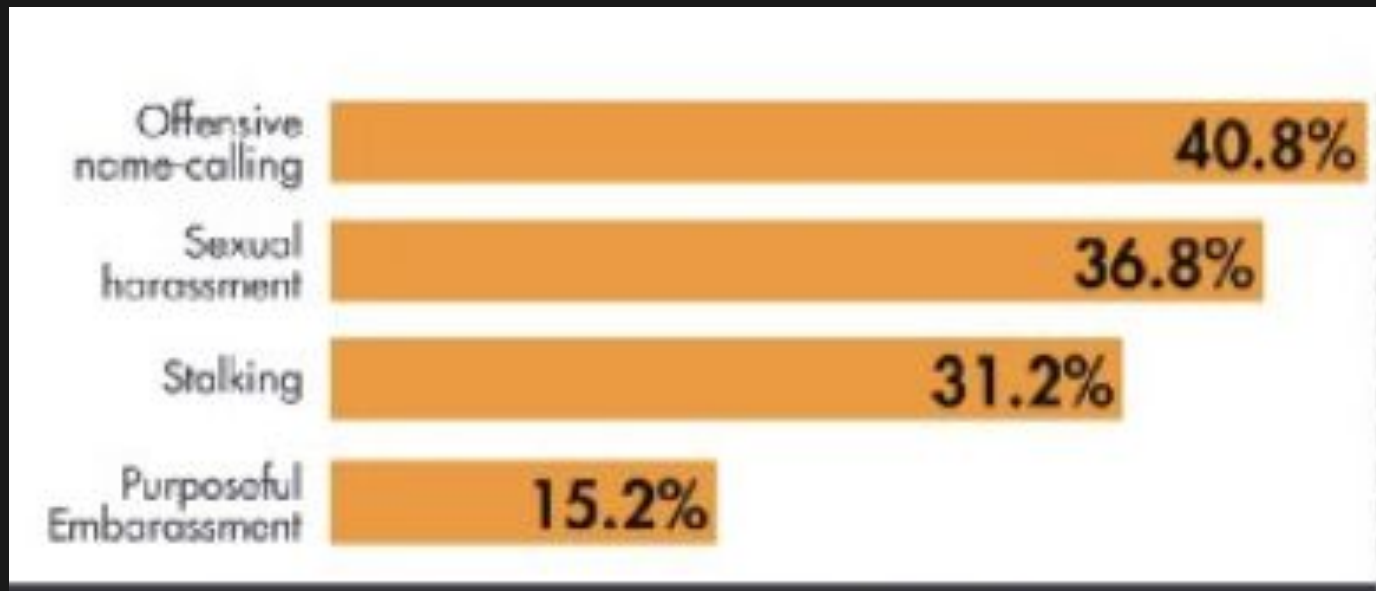


What does the law say?

Any act of gender-based violence against a woman that is committed, **assisted or aggravated in part or fully by the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**, such as mobile phones and smartphones, the internet, social media platforms or email, against a woman because she is a woman, or affects women disproportionately.



Most common form of online GBV in South Africa



Key issues behind the violence

Women of colour were found to be 34% more likely to be targeted by online hate speech
- Amnesty International



40.7%

Gender



32.8%

Physical
Appearance



17.6%

Sexual
Orientation



Consequences suffered as a result of this Online Gender-Based Violence



61.7%

Mental Stress



15.5%

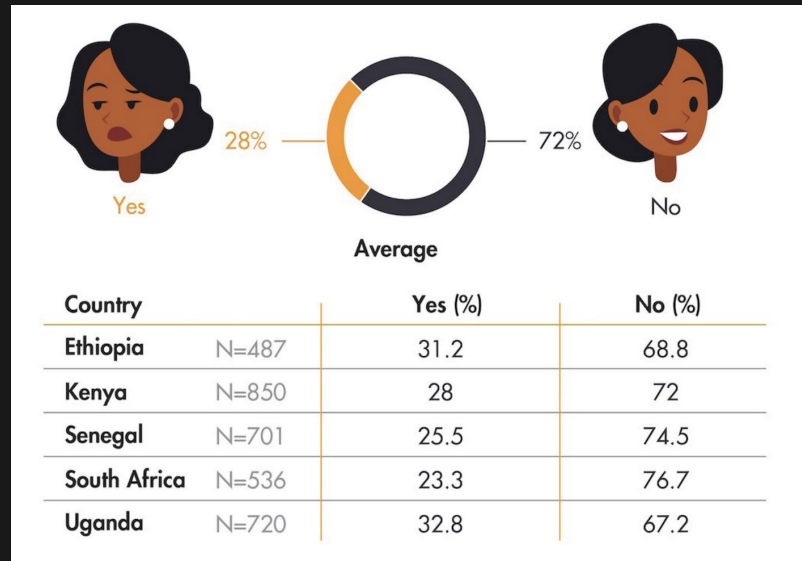
Damaged
Reputation



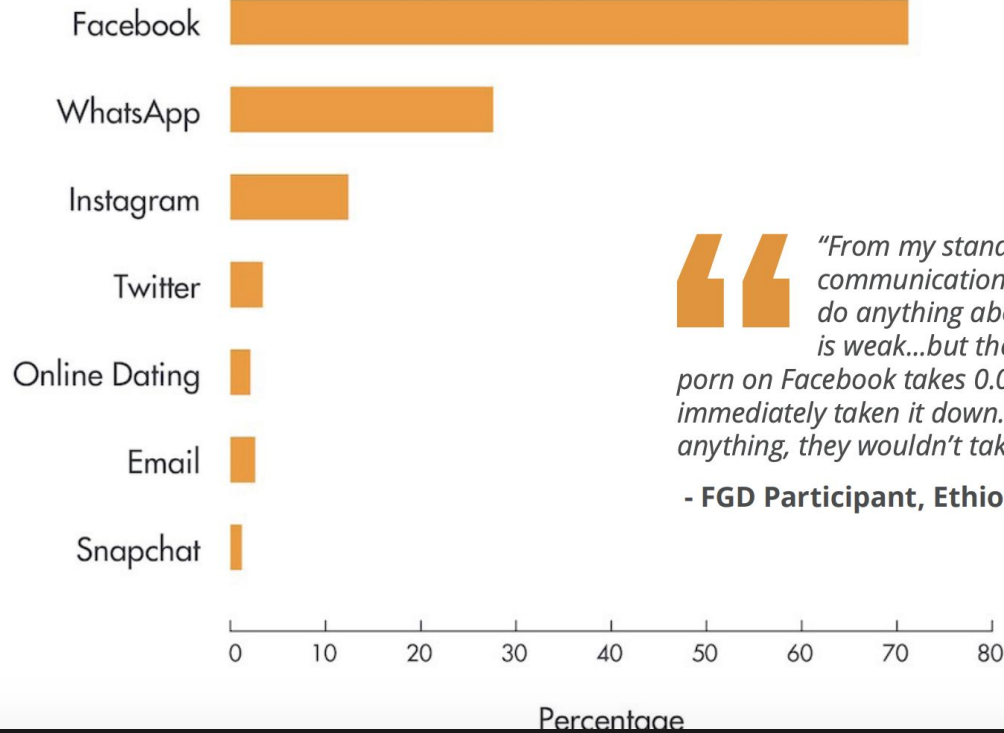
13.3%

Problems with
Family

39% of African women concerned about going online



Where does it take place?



"From my stand, I would say Telegram is unmanageable communication media. It is worrying and out of regulation. You can't do anything about it. We can say the Facebook community standard is weak...but the good thing is it has a regulatory system. Revenge porn on Facebook takes 0.05 micro seconds until AI recognizes it after that it immediately taken it down. If your porn is posted on Telegram, you can't do anything, they wouldn't take it down as far as I know."

- FGD Participant, Ethiopia



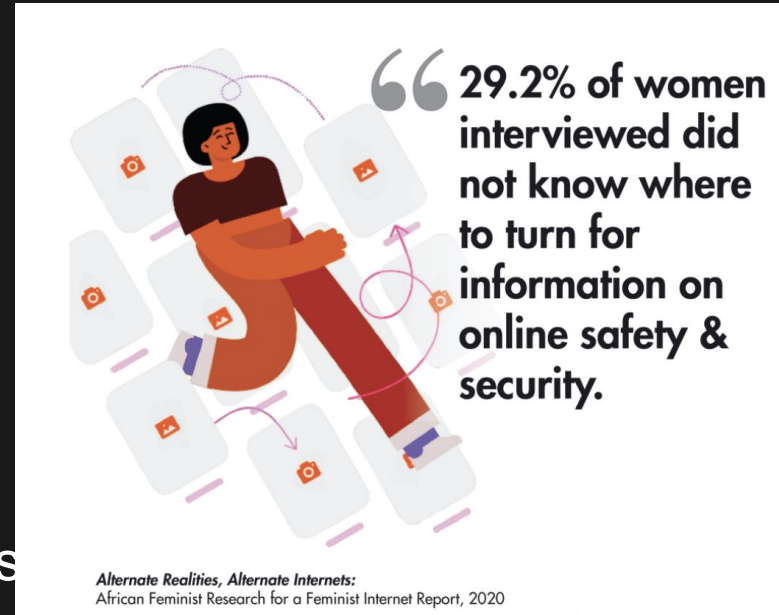
Why does this happen?

Online disinhibition effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Perceived anonymity● Invisibility of the recipient● Action-at-a-Distance
Toxic platforms breed anti-feminist radicalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reputation as an alpha user.● Echo chambers/Group behaviour● Individual identity is de-emphasised,● Polarization
Automation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Technology makes abuse easier, less skill or effort



Lack of security awareness

- Only 36% took steps towards increasing their safety online
- “No one would take the time to hack my account” (34.6%).
- “Never thought about it” (25.7%)
- 86% were not aware of policies and laws in place to protect them.



If perpetrator was reported to the platform? (South Africa)



Alternate Realities, Alternate Internets:
African Feminist Research for a Feminist Internet Report, 2020



What needs to happen?



1. **More research & data on online GBV (in Africa)**
 - a. Major gap in data on types of online violence
 - b. Data is not gender-disaggregated
 - c. Lack of a comparative analysis of online versus physical violence
 - i. Why is Twitter not more transparent?

2. **More security awareness & education (for women)**
 - a. General security awareness - privacy settings, MFA, mobile security
 - b. How to report / react to harassment if it happens
 - c. Where to find help: online support and counselling
 - d. Your rights



What needs to happen?

3. Awareness & education for law enforcement and first responders

- a. Law enforcement personnel must be trained on a gender-sensitive digital safety
- b. address complaints of online gender-based violence
- c. provide timely technical assistance, counseling and support

4. Legal frameworks

- d. reflect an appreciation of the role of the internet in the social, economic, and political lives of women
- e. In conjunction with other measures, **such as socio-economic upliftment, awareness-raising programs and counselling services.**

What needs to happen?



5. Platforms need to identify and block GBV / misogynistic content

- a. Close monitoring with the possibility to act upon
- b. Deep Learning / ML & AI to automatically detect hateful speech can facilitate this process, up to **95% accuracy** as per research conducted during Google Summer of Code 2018.

“Online Hatred of Women in the Incels.me Forum - Linguistic Analysis and Automatic Detection” <https://organisms.be/downloads/incels.pdf>



Out of the box..



- Perpetrators act on a deeply unconscious level
- Lack of self worth and feeling loveless
- Violence often response to early childhood trauma
- Male sexual abuse is overly underreported
 - 1 in 6 boys is sexually abused before their 18th birthday.

- 1. Dube SR, Anda RF, Whitfield CL, et al. Long-term consequences of childhood sexual abuse by gender of victim. Am J Prev Med. 2005;28:430-438.



Out of the box..



- Start an **army of conscious warriors (automated possibly?)** who will DDOS trolls and forums with kind messaging?
 - Links to mindful meditation
- Start cyber safety & GBV education & awareness in kindergarten, schools etc
- #Hetoo movement?



References - please read

African Feminist Research for a Feminist Internet Neema Iyer, Bonnita Nyamwire and Sandra Nabulega August 2020 https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/Report_FINAL.pdf

Online Hatred of Women in the Incels.me Forum: Linguistic Analysis and Automatic Detection
<https://organisms.be/downloads/incels.pdf>

Gender ideology and social identity processes in online language aggression against women
https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/Report_FINAL.pdf

Fighting Violence Against Women Online: A Comparative Analysis of Legal Frameworks In Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda
https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/Legal_Analysis_FINAL.pdf



Thank you!

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