

National Models for Women's Safety Online (NMWSO) Program



Overview

The National Models for Women's Safety Online (NMWSO) Program is a catalytic initiative that seeks to address threats to women's engagement and leadership in digital spaces. The program will work with public and private sector actors in Kenya and the Philippines to document, test, and advance system-level responses to prevent and mitigate online abuse targeting women leaders.



Context

Women face hostility, abuse, and harassment in digital spaces – the phenomenon that is often described as TFGBV. In addition to the severe negative impact on individuals targeted with TFGBV, it has a “chilling effect” on the future of leadership and undercuts the benefits that women's participation brings to societies worldwide. NMWSO works to promote safe and inclusive digital spaces; empower the digital participation of women, including in the digital economy; and support those impacted by online violence. Because the burden of violence prevention and response should not fall on those who experience it, NMWSO will deliberately engage duty bearers, particularly government and tech stakeholders, to gather evidence and create survivor-centered, scalable models to address TFGBV.

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)

TFGBV is a threat or act of violence committed, assisted, aggravated, and amplified in part or fully by using information and communication technologies or digital media that is disproportionately targeted at women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals (Global Partnership, 2023). Globally 66% of women have experienced online violence of some kind (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security, 2024).

Across Kenya and the Philippines, the NMWSO program will:

Deepen understanding and evidence of TFGBV tactics and impact

Collaborate with the private sector to improve digital infrastructure with 'safety by design'

Engage governments to strengthen regulatory pathways to prevent and address TFGBV

Support survivors with resilience and perseverance in digital spaces

About IREX

IREX is a global development and education organization. We strive for a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world—where individuals reach their full potential, governments serve their people, and communities thrive. With an annual portfolio of \$140 million and 700 staff worldwide, we work with partners in more than 120 countries in four areas essential to progress: cultivating leaders, empowering youth, strengthening institutions, and increasing access to quality education and information.

NMWSO Implementation

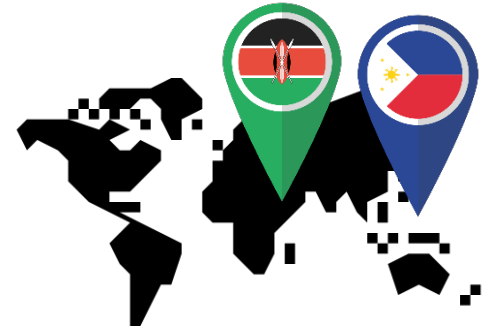
NMWSO will collaborate with experts and key stakeholders in Kenya and the Philippines to pilot innovative models for online safety to prevent, mitigate, and respond to TFGBV:

The Philippines

A study conducted by Plan International found that **nearly 68% of girls and young women** in the Philippines have experienced online harassment, primarily on social media, with **50%** reporting that this occurs frequently, and **33%** reporting that it happens very frequently. **Seventy-nine percent** said that they or other girls they know have received threats of sexual violence on social media.

Kenya

A study conducted by the World Wide Web Foundation revealed that **one in every five women in Kenya** have experienced online harassment. According to a study by Pollicy, **56% of women political candidates** included in the study during Kenya's 2022 general election experienced TFGBV targeting their Facebook accounts, compared with only 35% of men candidates.



Leveraging Existing Initiatives, Tools, and Resources

The NMWSO Program will build upon and coordinate with other global initiatives to mitigate, prevent, and address threats to women's engagement online and to promote online safety more broadly. This includes leveraging resources developed by IREX's flagship anti-TFGBV USAID-funded [Transform Digital Spaces \(Transform\) program](#).

Existing Tools and Resources



[Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence as an Attack on Women's Public Participation: Review of Global Evidence and Implications](#)



[Digital Threats and Public Participation Landscape Assessment Methodology](#)



[Women's Digital Resource Catalogue](#)

Funding Partners

NMWSO is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and implemented by IREX and IREX's subsidiary, [Development Gateway](#). Development Gateway is a leading digital development implementer, having supported over 70 country governments and leading development agencies in developing and deploying rights-respecting digital systems.

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