



*She*  
LEADS



# 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AND BEYOND

**STOP  
VIOLENCE  
AGAINST  
WOMEN**





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# #SheLeads16Days against Gender Based Violence

Hey there!

Welcome to our volume 3 edition of the #SheLeads16Days against Gender-Based Violence campaign. A time when we amplify our voices even more in the fight against gender-based violence within our communities. So, let's kick back, dig in, and talk about what really matters. These 16 days, spanning from November 25th to December 10th and beyond, serve as a collective reminder to stand against any form of violence jeopardizing women's lives. It's a call to action, urging us to work towards a future where gender-based violence is eradicated, and the dignity of every girl and woman is preserved.

As we kick off this exploration, let's take a moment to understand the pillars of the She Leads Program – a strategic initiative aiming to increase the sustained influence of girls and young women on decision-making processes and the transformation of gender norms.

Our magazine seeks to enhance collective action by featuring stories and insights that amplify the voices of girls, young women, key stakeholders, and men championing for positive masculinity. We delve into the power of collective advocacy, showcasing the impact of unified efforts in creating a gender-responsive collaborations.

We also spotlight stories that challenge stereotypes, celebrate diversity, and contribute to fostering a more inclusive and accepting socio-cultural environment. We draw attention to the importance of empowering girls and young women to actively engage in political and decision-making institutions. Through inspiring interviews, insightful articles, and calls to action, we aim to fuel the momentum for transformative change within institutions.

As you immerse yourselves in the stories and articles within these pages, let them serve as a catalyst for your continued efforts. Together, we're not just advocates; we are architects of change, shaping a future where girls and young women lead with influence and impact. Cheers to the journey ahead!

Ms. Karen Ondwasi  
She Leads Program Coordinator  
GIMAC Young Women Network



# GIMAC Young Women Network

## Chair's Note

Dear Readers,

I'm super excited to welcome you to the She Leads 16 Days magazine, crafted by the GIMAC Young Women Network in line with the 2023 theme of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence **"Invest to Prevent Violence against Women & Girls"**. With sincere joy and a deep commitment, I warmly greet all advocates and change-makers actively involved in this vital conversation.

As we navigate these stories, let us collectively draw attention to the urgent need for change. It is a call to action, an opportunity to unite and stand against the myriad forms of violence that threaten the well-being and aspirations of young women. Our hope is that these narratives inspire dialogue, reflection, and, most importantly, tangible steps toward a future free from gender-based violence.

I extend heartfelt appreciation to all contributors, collaborators, and members of the GIMAC Young Women Network for their unwavering commitment in bringing these stories to life. I also extend my gratitude to our long-time partner Plan International for their financial and technical support in the development of this magazine.

May the contents of this magazine be a source of empowerment, sparking a flame that propels us further on the path towards equality, justice, and the relentless pursuit of a world where young women can thrive without fear.

In solidarity,

Ms. Melissa Kubvurono  
Chairperson, GIMAC Young Women Network  
Zimbabwe





# Photo Hub



Positive masculinity in the community



SGBV and Police



Africa Youth month



She leads



Peace And Security



4th Women Peace and security meeting



## The fear of Gender Based Violence dictates the lives of women.

Advocacy coordinator, the Nelson Mandela Bay YMCA  
South Africa

“ My choice of clothing for events must be well thought out, lest I become a victim. The times I choose to take a walk outside of my house, down to the way I can reject sexual or romantic advances all are influenced by the pervasive impact of GBV statistics I see. ”



Fion Mfenqa

As a woman living in South Africa, gender-based violence is a subject with which I am well acquainted. I live in a country where our traditions, rooted in patriarchy, continue to perpetuate violence against women and children by men. Most, if not all, of our cultures and cultural practices continue to reinforce gender norms that place men in authoritative positions and women in subordinate positions, leading to power dynamics that justify and normalise violence against women.

GBV is a prevailing occurrence that continues to manifest itself in my daily thoughts. My choice of clothing for events must be well thought out, lest I become a victim. The times I choose to take a walk outside of my house, down to the way I can reject sexual or romantic advances—all are influenced by the pervasive impact of GBV statistics I see.

GBV is something that affects many women, especially in rural areas, to the extent that the majority of communities are desensitised to it. Understandably, social norms have taught them that certain behaviours are to be accepted and acceptable.

From a young age, I have heard many women and young girls within my community and

vicinity saying things like, "If he doesn't hit you, then he doesn't really love you?". "Do not dress like that, otherwise, you will give the wrong impression". "You can't go out at this time; you know there are people out there."

As South African as I may be, I continue to be a second-class citizen because all the things I do are based on the choices I make—from the clothes I wear to the times I choose to walk out of my house, right down to when I choose to sleep. Gender-based violence remains a prevailing thought.

I try to play my part in addressing the issue by facilitating sessions on sexual reproductive health and rights for adolescents in local schools around my YMCA. I believe that by teaching young people their rights and responsibilities in relation to SRHR we make them aware of their rights and give them tools to stand against violence directed towards them. I hope we can create a world where everyone is equal and we get rid of the narrative that women have to be treated as the lesser gender



# Combating gynecological and obstetrical violence in Africa

By Nafissate Hounkpatin, Midwife  
Benin



Nafissate Hounkpatin

Gynecological and obstetrical violence takes various forms, ranging from malicious care to sexist surgical acts. The World Health organization identifies different categories of abuse within the healthcare context. These include physical violence that entails the use of force on women. It also speaks about sexual violence and verbal violence that may entail threats and taunts. Women, in a bid to access maternal healthcare are also faced with discrimination and stigma based on their ethnicity, age, financial ability etc. Such kind of discriminations make it hard for them to seek healthcare services. There is also the issue of poor caregiver/patient relationship which are influenced by patriarchal cultures that see women as lesser beings and therefore deserve poor treatment. These categories collectively underline the diverse forms of mistreatment women go through, emphasizing the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address and prevent such issues, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of maternal healthcare

Obstetric violence is mainly caused by an

“ In the West African context, ending obstetrical violence requires culturally sensitive and region-specific strategies. Raising awareness should be tailored to local communities, taking into account diverse cultural norms and practices that expose women to violence. ”

imbalance in the relationship between caregivers and patients. This gap, especially concerning cultural differences and symbolic capital, is worsened by high maternal mortality rates, creating an environment where violence can occur. Additionally, poor working conditions contribute to obstetric violence. Policies from international institutions, sometimes overlook resource shortages and other lived realities communities. This have negatively affected healthcare workers' working conditions, causing frustration. Unfortunately, women often bear the brunt of this frustration. Cultural norms can also impede women's access to quality care during and after childbirth, leading to stigmatization and harmful medical practices.

In the West African context, ending obstetrical violence requires culturally sensitive and region-specific strategies. Raising awareness should be tailored to local communities, taking into account diverse cultural norms and practices. Advocacy efforts should emphasize the importance of informed decision-making and respect for individual



choices within the context of West African traditions. Improving the training of healthcare professionals should include cultural competency and awareness of the unique needs of pregnancy related needs among women in the region. There is also a need for encouraging open dialogue, feedback, and community engagement is essential in fostering a culture of respectful maternity care, ultimately working towards the goal of ending obstetrical violence in the region.

The Respectful Maternity Care Charter marks a first step towards the recognition of human rights related to maternity. Its proper implementation must be followed by concrete changes in the organization of healthcare structures.

In conclusion the mobilization of national and international actors is crucial to bring about lasting change. Transforming logistical aspects, legislation and medical practices will allow a significant improvement in gynecological and obstetrical care. Ultimately, this will help create an environment conducive to patient empowerment and a positive birth experience.

Training of healthcare professionals should include cultural competency and awareness of the unique needs of pregnancy related needs among women in the region. There is also a need for encouraging open dialogue, feedback, and community engagement is essential in fostering a culture of respectful maternity care, ultimately working towards the goal of ending obstetrical violence in the region.

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## Women Voices

### Ending GBV in TOGO

#### Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Togo

“ The Togolese government has intensified initiatives to promote gender equality through strengthening legislative and legal texts such as the adoption or updating various texts, including the penal code and the national gender equity policy. ”

Internet has become “The” place to connect, interact or do business post-Corona Virus pandemic. It has also opened doors to online harassment and violence towards women and girls especially. As a volunteer, I have participated in organizing educational training on gender-based violence as well as sexual and reproductive health for girls and women in Togo. Through these activities we have been able to sensitize girls and women



Abra Sophie Ketshia  
ADABA



of our communities on causes and impact of GBV.

As an organization, we run online campaigns to highlight issues of cyber bullying and online violence. In Togo, I am in charge of running two of such online campaigns dubbed “Week Without Violence” activities as well as “Black Thursdays” activities. Week without Violence is an annual global Campaign which the YWCA has held for the past 25 years. It is held on the third week of October every year and has been dedicated to raising awareness, promoting change, and enabling positive action to end violence against women, young women, and girls in all their diversity.

The Togolese government has intensified initiatives to promote gender equality through strengthening legislative and legal texts such as the adoption or updating various texts, including the penal code and the national gender equity policy to cite a few. Actions are being taken by the government as well as civil societies and Non-Governmental Organizations to eradicate gender-based violence in our communities.

When there is a will, there is a way. As long all stakeholders put in effort and keep advocating against gender-based violence in our communities and online, I believe GBV will come to an end and we will have peaceful societies. I recommend that all victims of GBV should continue sharing their stories and experiences to continue to create awareness in communities. Its also vital for all communities to have shelters and safe spaces where the victims can seek help and get the support they need.

## Women Voices

### Combating GBV through the Gender Desk of the Police Department

Linnet Khaoya 97548 PCLW  
Kenya

“ I receive at least more than 10 cases of GBV monthly at the gender desk in our police station. It has also come to our attention most women fear to report because of fear of being shamed, the fear of losing their marriages, fear of being punished for reporting and the fear to expose violence related issues to their kids and family members.

”

My name is Linnet Khaoya number 97548 PCLW attached at Nambale police station and officer in-charge Gender. In many police stations there is no gender desk where cases of GBV can be reported and dealt with accordingly. We are privileged to own one in our community which was donated by Africa Inland and Community Agency for Development (AICCAD) .The reason for donation was to address some of the gaps in access to

services for survivors of GBV, including offering a survivor-centered response and a conducive environment for survivors to report cases of GBV, and also act a as the focal points for reporting gender-based violence cases. This encourages more people to report and also to get sensitized about Gender Based Violence. This is because, some communities do not even know GBV is wrong since its their everyday norm.



Linnet Khaoya



I receive at least more than 10 cases of GBV monthly at the gender desk in our police station. It has also come to our attention most women fear to report because of fear of being shamed, the fear of losing their marriages, fear of being punished for reporting and the fear to expose violence related issues to their kids and family members. In this part of the country GBV happens as a result of activities such as Disco-Matanga which can be loosely translated to night dance. Night dances are very common and expose young girls to violence such as rape and teen pregnancies. Most young children are left under the care of elderly grandparents who may not have the strength to keep following them around so they escape and go for night dances. This gets them exposed to GBV. This calls for all stakeholders and communities to mentor the young girls and run activities to keep them busy especially during the holidays. It also calls for mentorship of men to be allies in the fight against GBV.

This gender desk in the police department is here to support the community and it is important that they make use of it. This can only happen we continue to run the many campaigns and awareness creation interventions led by youth including the annual She Leads 16 Days annual Campaigns which we have done for two years in a row now. Such awareness creations, community marches, artistic expressions and dialogues encourage more youth to come out and participate in the campaign to end GBV. It also encourages more girls and young women to speak up!

I call upon the government, Civil Societies, and all partners to ensure there are more gender desks within police departments in the country with trained police officers who can effectively handle GBV cases. GBV awareness should not only happen during 16 Days but throughout the year to enable us have safe societies.

## Women Voices

### Addressing Gender Based Violence through community safe spaces

My name is Loice Njenge, I am 21 years old. I live in rural Zimbabwe, Shamva at Simba village. I am a game changer from Rozaria Memorial Trust where I am a young mentor at community Nhanga. Nhanga is a safe space for girls where we do intergenerational conversation about girls' well-being and sexual reproductive health rights education. I am also a member of Girls and Goals where we empower girls through sports, arts, and culture for them to achieve their goals. I am also part of African women's leaders network entrepreneur Mashonaland Central where I do bag weaving and detergents making as a way to earn income. I am currently studying telecommunication engineering at Telone learning Centre.

Participating in girls safe spaces such as Nhanga makes me more confident because I interact with other girls and get to share views and experiences. From the Nhange, I got education about girls rights which makes



Loice Njenge



me know and understand my rights better. In the Nhangas, I have freedom to express myself, my raw emotions and ideas without worrying about being criticized or shamed. In the Nhangas I have peer to peer conversation with girls of my age and we support each other. On April 2022, I experienced trauma and emotional abuse because of a man getting into my bedroom in the middle of the night without my permission. I easily noticed that it was abuse because I learnt about my rights. I reported the case and shared during the Nhangas sessions.

Nhangas helps me to break down trauma and to get healed fast since I get a lot of support and comfort. For me to get justice Nhangas plays a big role since it is difficult for young girls to get justice independently. My Nhangas mentor Ms Hilda Mugaragumbo helps me with the support and guidance of going to Chiefs court to seek justice since the police court judged the case unfairly. Such community safe spaces help to keep me and other girls from the community safer from gender based violence.

In Nhangas we learn skills such as girls economic empowerment. That is where I learnt bag weaving and detergents making skills. Through this I am able to buy my own personal needs as a girl which reduces my vulnerability to violence and exploitation. Being in school is the best way to keep girls out of gender-based violence. Since I have some income, it makes it easier for me to go and apply for tertiary education. Through Nhangas I am now in school since it is providing my educational financial needs.



## Women Voices

### Nursing Survivors of Gender-Based Violence in Armed Conflict in DRC CongoNyirandeze Marie, Nurse at the Rutsiro Health Center DRC Congo

“ As a Psychosocial Assistant, Nyirandeze Marie plays an essential role in raising awareness within her community about the management of cases of gender-based violence, referral pathways, reporting mechanisms, and measures to mitigate risks related to gender-based violence (GBV) ”





Nyirandeze Marie is an exceptional nurse at the Rutsiro Health Center, whose unwavering dedication has contributed to the well-being of patients for over two decades. Her remarkable journey has led her to become a trusted Psychosocial Assistant in the Rwanguba area, located in the Rutshuru territory of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Nyirandeze Marie has dedicated her career to supporting survivors of gender-based violence in the Rwanguba area. Despite the challenges posed by armed conflict, she remains steadfast in supporting these women and their families. Her empathy and understanding of their pain allows her to create a safe space where they can open up and receive the support they need. Her smile, thoughtful gestures, and active listening contribute to alleviating their stress and helping them rebuild their lives.

As a Psychosocial Assistant, Nyirandeze Marie plays an essential role in raising awareness within her community about the management of cases of gender-based violence, referral pathways, reporting mechanisms, and measures to mitigate risks related to gender-based violence (GBV). She organizes information and sensitization sessions to educate community members about reporting mechanisms, referral pathways, and measures to

mitigate risks related to GBV. Her goal is to break the silence surrounding these acts of violence and encourage a collective response to combat this scourge.

Nyirandeze Marie embodies the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity.. Her work is a source of hope for women who have experienced trauma, showing them that it is possible to rebuild and find support. She also inspires her colleagues and community with her determination to make a positive difference.

Sofepadi , who are part of the GIMAC Young Women Network have adopted an innovative approach in collaboration with healthcare facilities, including the Rutsuru Health Center, aiming to improve services for the care of survivors of gender-based violence. This initiative provides free and comprehensive care to survivors, both in urban and rural areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The successful collaboration between Sofepadi and the Rutsuru Health Center highlights the importance of coordination between civil society organizations and healthcare structures to provide holistic support to survivors of GBV. This positive collaboration, aims to foster healing, reintegration, and empowerment of survivors in Congolese society amid the ongoing conflict.





## Collective action in combating GBV.

### Betty Ewurafua Mensah

My name is Miss Betty Ewurafua Mensah, the Gender Rep for the Ashanti Regional council of YMCAs, and the current S2C Ambassador for the country under the African Alliance of YMCAs and this is my stance on Gender Based Violence.

Gender-based violence is a widespread issue cutting across cultural, social, and economic boundaries, demanding urgent attention. As an advocate for equity, justice, and human rights, I firmly oppose such violence, emphasizing the need for collective action to address its deep-rooted causes. In the 21st century, the persistence of gender-based violence, whether physical, emotional, or economic, underscores the imperative for advocacy and change.

Central to combating gender-based violence is the promotion of widespread awareness through education. Challenging stereotypes and biases while fostering a culture of respect can empower individuals to identify and condemn violence in all its forms. Legal and policy reforms are crucial components of this fight, involving the establishment of stricter laws, effective enforcement, and accessible support systems for survivors.

Unwavering support for survivors is paramount, necessitating the creation of safe spaces, counseling services, and opportunities for economic independence. Additionally, preventing gender-based violence hinges on promoting gender equality. Treating individuals with equal respect and providing equal opportunities irrespective of gender undermines the foundations of violence. Supporting initiatives for gender parity in all aspects of life is a potent contribution to this cause.

In conclusion, standing against gender-based violence requires a collective effort from individuals, communities, and societies. Raising awareness, advocating legal reforms, and supporting survivors are pivotal actions toward creating a world free from the chains of gender-based violence. It is time to unite in the commitment to constructing a more just and equitable society for all.



Betty Ewurafua Mensah



## Gender Based Violence among women in Leadership.

**Jamirah Navuga**  
Local Council Chairperson, Katwe

“ Women in politics often face verbal abuse through statements that degrade them and their bodies. It takes courage to persevere. In addressing GBV among young women in leadership, it's important to have mentors to guide you and hold your hand. This calls for the inter-generational co-leadership and mentorship ”

I am Jamirah Navuga, the ruling party (NRM) administrator for Makindye Division, leading over 200 villages (zones). This position traditionally has been held by older men. It now rests in the hands of a young woman for the first time. Simultaneously, I serve as the woman Local Council 2 chairperson in Katwe, one of the largest slum areas in Uganda.

My journey into politics and leadership began during my High School Certificate (HSC) years at Makindye Secondary School. Despite being a newcomer with no prior experience, I decided to run for the post of head prefect. Although I did not win, my confidence during the campaigns caught the attention of the head teacher and staff. They introduced a new position, "In charge of Headmistress's office and Chief Justice," a role I was awarded, marking the commencement of my political and leadership life.

In Makerere University, I actively participated in student leadership. I advocated for female representation, leading to the establishment of such representation in various capacities. Post-university, driven by my concerns about gender imbalance in politics. I became a Polling assistant, providing me with insights into the positions that interested me. This eventually led to my historic



Jamirah Navuga

appointment as the first female Sub-country/Division youth chairperson. These political positions, while exciting to some, come with numerous challenges. Many women leaders face difficulties speaking out due to feelings of inferiority, while others endure oppression from men. The pervasive issue of gender-based violence (GBV) affects women in politics both physically and mentally.

Reflecting on my own experiences, I shared instances of a certain man making my life difficult by screaming my name and hurling insults in the taxi park. Such acts could easily embarrass and discourage many. Women in politics often face verbal abuse through statements that degrade them and their bodies. It takes courage to persevere. In addressing GBV among young women in leadership, it's important to have mentors to guide you and hold your hand. This calls for the inter-generational co-leadership and mentorship. Women should also stay focused and never get distracted by the noise. As a





woman leader, I also emphasize on the need to pray as seek guidance in your leadership. Communities should also help women and protect them from GBV especially during electioneering periods when violence is rampant.

Amidst the challenges, I am committed to creating awareness, mentoring others, being available, and involving male partners in our community. I aim to inspire positive change and pave the way for more women to get into leadership.

## Women Voices

# The Vital Role of Media in Combating Gender-Based Violence

By **Nadia Malm**  
Filmmaker, Ghana

“ Maintaining confidentiality and protecting the identities of GBV victims are paramount considerations for responsible media practices. Reckless reporting can inadvertently retraumatize victims, discourage reporting, and perpetuate a culture of silence. Journalistic ethics must prioritize the privacy and safety of survivors, refraining from sensationalism or intrusive coverage

”

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive and deeply entrenched issue that affects individuals worldwide. As a powerful agent of societal influence, the media holds a crucial responsibility in contributing to the eradication of GBV.

The media plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and influencing societal norms. By consistently raising awareness about the prevalence, consequences, and underlying causes of GBV, the media can contribute to changing attitudes and fostering a culture of intolerance towards such violence. News reports, documentaries, and educational programs can serve as effective tools for disseminating information, challenging stereotypes, and debunking myths surrounding GBV.

Maintaining confidentiality and protecting the identities of GBV victims are paramount considerations for responsible media practices. Reckless reporting can inadvertently retraumatize victims, discourage reporting, and perpetuate a culture of silence. Journalistic ethics must prioritize



Nadia Malm

the privacy and safety of survivors, refraining from sensationalism or intrusive coverage. Media outlets should adhere to guidelines that shield victims from unnecessary exposure, ensuring that the focus remains on condemning the violence itself rather than sensationalizing individual cases.

Empowering survivors to share their stories is a key strategy in breaking the cycle of silence surrounding GBV. The media should actively promote platforms for survivors to voice their experiences, fostering an environment that encourages openness and empathy. Through interviews, survivor testimonials, and survivor-led initiatives, the media can amplify the voices of those affected, providing a platform for empowerment and advocacy. Responsible reporting can inspire others to come forward, challenge societal norms, and contribute to the larger movement against GBV.

In the battle against Gender-Based Violence, the media serves as a powerful ally in raising awareness, protecting victims' identities, and encouraging survivors to speak up. By recognizing its responsibility and embracing



ethical reporting practices, the media can contribute significantly to dismantling the structures that perpetuate GBV. It is essential for media outlets, practitioners, and consumers alike to collaborate in

creating a narrative that rejects violence, supports survivors, and advocates for a society free from the scourge of Gender-Based Violence.

## Women Voices

# The Unperceived Damage

## Ethiopia

“The Amhara Region conflict in Ethiopia disrupted education for six months, impacting students' futures. Political considerations hinder solutions, perpetuating violence and diverting young people from their dreams.”

My name is Ahadu Andualem, a third-year medical student at Bahir Dar University, and I find it imperative to address the silence and distressing trends in our country, particularly within the context of the ongoing conflict in the Amhara Region. In this article, titled "The Unperceived Damage," the name reflects the underestimated impact of these issues, hindering our ability to foresee the current and potential losses for our nation and its future generations. The importance of peace has become evident amidst the alarming trends, as peace, defined as the absence of disturbance or agitation, is crucial for human life in various aspects - personal, social, political, institutional, ecological, and beyond.

As it is known many national and international organizations work in the peace building process because it is a paramount and fundamental thing for the human's day to day life. The peace education theory states that, "Education for positive peace focuses on the human rights with the purpose of eliminating conflicts." Both Peace and Education has the potential to nurture one another. Education helps in raising awareness and gives knowledge and skills which can be important for the common good. If there is no peace, there is no education; there is no work; there is no family.....no harmony.....without exaggerating there is no life!

As much of our country's history is marked by wars, the current situation in the Amhara Region is a stark reminder of the ongoing struggles. For six months, political turmoil has disrupted education, putting the futures of students like myself in jeopardy. The civil war, not with external nations but amongst Ethiopian citizens, has led to a situation where decisions about our education and future careers are now contingent upon the political decisions. Despite our efforts to communicate with school officials and the Ministry of Education, political considerations appear to hinder finding a solution, perpetuating a cycle of violence that claims civilian lives, causes destruction, and diverts young people and students from their dreams.

Living with educational interruptions has become commonplace for students in northern Ethiopia, with various challenges, including the recent political unrest and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prolonged periods without schooling not only interrupt education but also will result in many complicated psychological and mental problems: feeling of hopelessness, depression and post-traumatic stress disorders are the common ones. But here all these processes will make the quality of education to be under interrogation. This prevailing circumstance not only affect the quality of education but raises concerns about the prospects for the next



Ahadu Andualem



generation, particularly those directly affected by the conflict in the Amhara Region.

I am also part of the affected students who is stuck at home without school but I don't want to lose this moment without doing anything. And for that I participate in different trainings, workshops, Rotaract and other engaging activities. I am also learning a sign language and this all are my escape mechanisms to be out of the trap. I am able to do all these all because am not in the war zone but my peers who cannot afford to do that and are passing through difficult situations. There are no opportunities to engage with and there is no internet service by which they might be able to update themselves and be kept within the track.

As the saying goes, peace is not the highest goal, but it is the most fundamental requirement of life. I strongly advocate for differentiating education and politics, recognizing their distinct roles in shaping our collective future and bringing attention to the pressing issues exacerbated by the conflict in the Amhara Region.

## Positive Masculinity

# Advancing Positive Masculinity and Collaboration to Combat Gender-Based Violence

## The African Young Men Movement on Gender



**Weluzani Michael**

I am an active gender equality advocate and very passionate about ending Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and promoting positive passion through. I work with The African Young Men Movement on Gender, a regional organization based in Harare Zimbabwe. Through African Young Men Movement on Gender (AYMMG), I actively engage in various programs and activities dedicated to combating GBV in my country.

One notable initiative is my facilitation of Young Men's Indaba in Zimbabwe, which provides a forum for young men to discuss and address issues related to GBV. This platform fosters open dialogue and empowers young men to challenge harmful gender norms, promoting positive masculinity and gender equality.

I firmly uphold that active involvement of men is crucial in achieving sustainable change in the battle against GBV. Rejecting toxic masculinity and embracing positive values like empathy, respect, accountability, consent, and equality contribute to eradicating GBV. My work aims to inspire men to become allies and advocates in the fight against GBV, serving as positive examples for future generations.





I collaborate with tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe to educate young men on the demerits of GBV. Through workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns, I raise awareness among college students about the negative impact of GBV on individuals and society as a whole. By targeting this crucial demographic, I aim to foster a generation of young men who actively reject violence and embrace respectful and egalitarian relationships. In addition to, I participate in high-level meetings on the implementation of peace and security for women in Africa. By participating in these meetings, I contribute to shaping policies and strategies that address GBV at national and regional levels. My participation in these discussions ensures that the voices and perspectives of positive masculinity are represented in the efforts to combat GBV effectively.

To effectively address GBV, I emphasize the need to fortify legal frameworks by implementing comprehensive legislation that criminalizes all forms of GBV and ensures appropriate penalties for offenders. Additionally, it's important to integrate gender equality, consent education, and GBV prevention into school curricula and community programs. Through awareness campaigns encompassing both urban and rural areas we will inspire behavioural transformation. Open and constructive dialogue between women and men plays a critical role in bridging gaps, dispelling stereotypes, and cultivating empathy. Recognizing that ending GBV is a shared responsibility, women and men can work collectively to challenge harmful gender norms, promote gender equality, and establish safe and inclusive communities free from violence and discrimination.

## Positive Masculinity

### Promoting Positive Masculinity to End GBV

**Rigoberty Mushi**  
Teacher and Global Change Agent  
Tanzania

Over the years, I have engaged in several activities aimed at combatting GBV, including seminars, awareness campaigns, and advocacy. I believe that GBV requires a collective effort, emphasizing that both men and women have roles in creating a society free from violence. Positive masculinity is integral, emphasizing healthy, respectful, and equitable relationships. Positive masculinity refers to embracing constructive and healthy expressions of masculinity, focusing on personal growth, emotional intelligence, and positive relationships. It encourages challenging traditional gender norms and rejecting harmful traits. It entails speaking up when you see your fellow men carrying out practices that promote GBV.

I believe that combating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in my country Tanzania, and across the continent demands a comprehensive and collaborative approach involving various stakeholders such as the government, civil society, communities, and individuals. Some key strategies that can be adopted include implementing existing legal



**Rigoberty Mushi**



frameworks, enhancing law enforcement, and the training of law enforcement officials and legal professionals to handle GBV cases effectively. It's also critical to educate men and create awareness on the role they need to play to advocate for violence-free communities.

Addressing GBV requires a sustained and collaborative effort from all sectors of society, and it is crucial to create an environment that promotes gender equality, supports survivors, and holds perpetrators accountable for their actions. GBV must be eradicated from our society today, for the realization of Gender equality.

## Positive Masculinity

### The voice of traditional leaders, Ghana

I am Nana Amanor Ntiamoah Gyan II, Kotokuhene (Chief of Akyepere Kotoku) and Kyidomhene (War Lord) of Mampong, in the Akuapem Traditional area of Ghana. In my esteemed position, I vehemently condemn Gender-based violence, considering it not only an abomination but also a manifestation of uncouth behavior. My conviction stems from a profound belief that the Creator, in crafting womanhood, took one of man's ribs, signifying an inherent equality and emphasizing the need for respect.

Understanding the physical differences between men and women, I firmly assert that the woman, being the potentially less physically robust of the two, deserves utmost protection and should never be subjected to any form of abuse, particularly physical violence. In situations where conflicts arise, I advocate for restraint and emotional composure. If a man finds himself offended by his female partner, my counsel is to temporarily withdraw, allowing emotions to settle, and return to the issue with a calm heart.

In instances where irreconcilable differences emerge, I advise parting ways amicably, allowing the woman to return to her family with dignity. Alternatively, sincere efforts should be made to resolve the issues, ensuring a peaceful coexistence. As a leader entrusted with conflict resolution within my chieftom, cases of domestic abuse are swiftly addressed. I emphasize the importance of the perpetrator acknowledging their wrongdoing, issuing a sincere apology, paying fines, compensating the aggrieved woman, and taking an oath to refrain from repeating such actions.

This approach has proven effective in fostering a sense of accountability and responsibility. A second occurrence of abuse prompts intervention beyond my jurisdiction, ensuring that legal measures are taken to address the transgressions. Upholding justice and the well-being of individuals within my community remains a paramount duty that I discharge with diligence and commitment.

As the custodian of tradition and justice in Akyepere Kotoku, I stand unwavering in my commitment to eradicating gender-based violence within our community. It is my firm belief that by upholding the principles of respect, empathy, and accountability, we not only preserve the sanctity of the Creator's design but also cultivate a society where every individual, regardless of gender, can thrive in an environment of dignity and mutual understanding. Let our collective efforts serve as a beacon, illuminating a path towards a future where harmony prevails, and the bonds of our shared humanity are celebrated above all else.





# Digital SafeTea : Combating GBV through Digital Security Training for African Women

By Irene Mwendwa  
Executive Director Pollicy

For the longest time, digital security trainings have been invite-only sessions geared towards career women like journalists and human rights defenders. Pollicy is looking to change this. With their new interactive fiction game, Digital SafeTea, we hope to reach thousands of African women from all walks of life with lessons and tips on how to keep themselves and their devices safe both online and offline

Technology and Innovations  
to end GBV



Click here to Play <https://digitalsafetea.com/>

Digital SafeTea, whose name is a portmanteau of digital safety and tea, is based on the storyline of three characters: Aisha, Goitse and Dami, who are based on different archetypes of African women.

As players step into the world of these three characters, they are faced with digital threats like zoom bombing, impersonation, and even Non-Consensual Sharing of Intimate Images (NCII) which is often referred to as revenge porn.

Once presented with a scenario, players are nudged to pick their response to the threat from available choices, as a way for them to get to the next stage of the game. As players weave through the maze of threats, they are presented with lessons on how to navigate such threats in real life. Players are also directed to sites and toolkits where they can get further learning on their desired topic.

The game style is heavily reminiscent of the pick your own adventure type of children's books, which Pollicy founder Neema Iyer, says were an inspiration to her when designing the game. It was important for the team to incorporate elements of storytelling to the game as traditional digital security training is often inaccessible.

For the longest time, digital security trainings have been invite-only sessions geared towards career women like journalists and human rights defenders. Pollicy is looking to change this. With their new interactive fiction game, [Digital SafeTea](#), we hope to reach thousands of African women from all walks of life with lessons and tips on how to keep themselves and their devices safe both online and offline.

Digital SafeTea comes at an opportune time as conversations on women's safety in digital spaces are being held worldwide. In 2020, as more people get online for work and studies, [women and girls worldwide experienced a surge of violence and abuse online](#). In addition, women and girls often do not know where to turn to for information on how to keep themselves safe from such attacks and more.

## About Pollicy

Pollicy is an award-winning feminist collective of technologists, data scientists, creatives and academics working at the intersection of data, design and technology to craft better life experiences by harnessing improved data. Our work



focuses on influencing a culture of responsible data use, promoting appropriate data governance practices and advocating for policies that support an enabling data ecosystem.

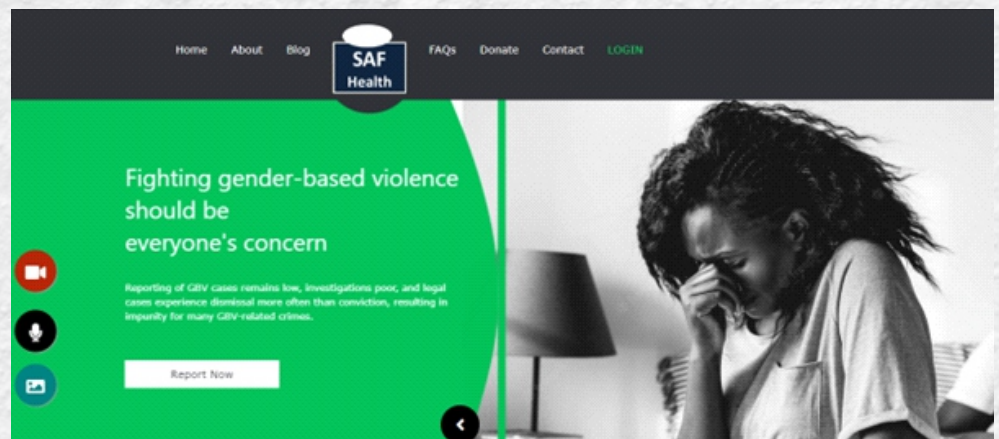
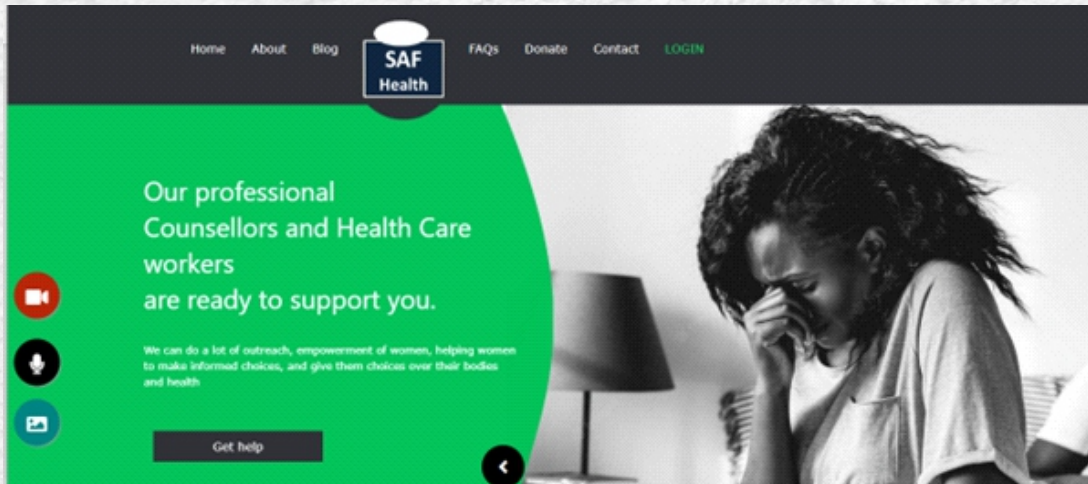
As a civic tech organisation, we believe in the power of data and technology to revolutionise how governments deliver services to their citizens. In today's world, the impact of existing and emerging technologies on advancing social justice and equality has quickly become incontrovertible. As part of our goal to achieve and promote gender equality, we believe it is important to criticise these technologies using feminist critique centring on the lived perspectives of women working in these spaces and using these digital tools in their daily lives for purposes of ease and comfort. ([www.policcy.org](http://www.policcy.org))



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# TECHNOLOGICAL INTERVENTION TO END GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

## SAF Health Portal



**#SheLeads16Days**



Access to SRHR services among young women and girls is still a challenge because of the stigma associated with it. As a result, my team and I created a friendly Web Portal called SAF Health Portal that allows girls and young women to access and share information without being judged. Having access to the correct information helps to mitigate gender-based violence and its impact.

Most girls will not report sexual violence because no one will believe them and the fear of insult and humiliation will keep them from talking. The Web Portal allows young women to access accurate information on SRHR and self-care that guards them against GBV especially sexual violence, contracting diseases and unsafe abortions. The Web Portal is a safe place to engage, seek help and get information on SRHR using codes instead of names. It promotes anonymity and confidentiality that the victims are looking for. The portal also gives young women power to decide for themselves and make better choices for their sexuality and bodies. They are able to seek solutions tailored to their individual needs e.g. when asking for a doctor or counselor, they decide whether they want an online conversation or to speak physically directly to the service providers. It allows them to choose which kind of service provider they would like to e.g. counseling, police, health Centre and have the choice of picking the sex of that doctor as well.

Through this Web Portal, users can report anonymously about the perpetrators. The User GROUP so far are the Female university students in Kampala of whom we pretested the prototype, we hope scale up to other regions. Due to financial constraints, we have not been able to exhaust this portal. Therefore, my call to action is for stakeholders, partners, funders and civil society organizations to support young women's technological interventions.

## Research on GBV

### She Leads Girls and Young Women Research on Cybercrime, Cyberbullying and Online sexual exploitation and Abuse targeting GYW.

“As we progress in this digital era where all conversations and activities are shifting to cyberspaces, it is important to ensure that the tools we use to make life and work convenient are not the same tools used to harm African girls and young women”

The She Leads pan African Girls and Young Women Advisory board is a board made up of nine dedicated girls and young women, aged between 14 to 24, who are passionate about women's and girls' rights selected to represent the seven African countries the She Leads project is being implemented in including Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana and Mali. The girls advisory board, roles includes guiding the various consortium partner organisations in the implementation of She Leads Activities, holding the consortium accountable for its commitments on gender, inclusion and safeguarding, and ensuring lived experiences of girls and young





women in countries where She Leads project is being implemented are heard and reflected in the highest level of decision-making within the consortium.

The advisory board is currently conducting research on Cybercrime, Cyberbullying and Online sexual exploitation and Abuse targeting GYW in an effort to raise awareness on cybersecurity and digital literacy. The research explores the different vulnerabilities and risks GYW face in digital spaces, it tries to identify intersectional challenges faced, their impact on GYW, available protective and counteractive measures in place including legal and social frameworks.

As we progress in this digital era where all conversations and activities are shifting to cyberspaces, it is important to ensure that the tools we use to make life and work convenient are not the same tools used to harm African GYW. From the 115 responses we got in a survey we conducted on GYW across the region more than 60% indicated that they have experienced some form of online GBV. It is important to note that we also saw a shift in answer at the end of the different consultations done as the awareness level on what constitutes online harassment is very low. Today existing in cyber spaces is a necessity rather than a choice so it is crucial to ensure that these technological tools are used for rather than against GYW. the risks, challenges and vulnerabilities GYW face in these spaces not only compromise their safety and integrity they also limit their opportunities for growth. Therefore conducting this research is vital as it provides GYW and other stakeholders a tool for evidence based advocacy that is gender and age specific.

The lack of awareness is one of the biggest challenges to ending the cybercrime, cyberbullying, online sexual exploitation, and abuse targeting girls and young women in Africa. GYWs must make conscious efforts to educate themselves and others around them in not only the risks and vulnerabilities they are exposed to but also the protective and countermeasures they can take. They must also hold government stakeholders accountable to ensure comprehensive and effective legal and social frameworks are put in place for their safety online.

AU, member states and stakeholders must reinforce the existing legal and social framework to actively be implemented in protecting GYW in digital spaces, moreover they must put in place a more comprehensive, financed and accessible protective and counteractive measures that will help end the cybercrime, online sexual exploitation, and abuse targeting girls and young women in Africa. must also hold government stakeholders accountable to ensure comprehensive and effective legal and social frameworks are put in place for their safety online.

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## Policies and Policy spaces at a Glance!

In a bid to ensure more young women understand existing policies and policy spaces at the regional level, we will be sharing existing policies and regional policy spaces that advocate for an end to Gender Based Violence (GBV) during the 16 Days and Beyond.

### Africa Youth Month Celebration in Uganda (November) Uganda

The African Union Commission through the Women, Gender, and Youth Directorate (WGYD) commemorated the African Youth Day 2023 through month-long activities under the theme *"1 Million Next Level is Knocking: Youth-led Movement that Transcends Borders"*. The theme is a call to all youth development stakeholders, member states, and partners to mobilize, implement and support the 1 Million Next Level Initiative through creating and accelerating opportunities for youth in the 4Es +H. The focus of the 1 million Next Level Initiative on 4Es + H is underpinned by a firm foundation of strategic partnerships among stakeholders and acknowledges young people beneficiaries and partners.

The Africa Youth Month Celebration created an opportunity to highlight and showcase young people and their contribution towards an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa. It also exists to empower young people through training, capacity development, and opportunities to thrive in various spaces, including health and wellbeing, engagement, education, employment, and entrepreneurship. During the Youth Month Celebrations, the GIMAC Young Women network through its She Leads program Launched a Toolkit to guide meaningful engagement and participation of Girls and Young Women in African Union Process and platforms. The toolkit would enable young women across borders to engage with different platforms and campaigns of the African Union that advocate for the well being of women. Young women can only engage effectively in policy spaces when they understand the spaces and are given a chance to. Beyond the 16 Days, the toolkit will be used to guide young women to contribute to existing policies that advocate for safe communities where women can thrive.



### 3rd Men's Conference on Positive Masculinity

The 3rd African Union (AU) Men's Conference on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End Violence Against



Women and Girls was held on 27th and 28th November in South Africa. The event was co-hosted by the President of the Union of Comoros, and 2023 AU Chairperson, H.E. Azali Assoumani and the President of the Republic of South Africa, H.E. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa.

In a significant stride towards ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) in Africa, the 3rd Men's Conference on Positive Masculinity in Leadership emerged as a key platform for consolidating bold continental efforts. The conference served as a pivotal moment for Heads of State and leaders from diverse sectors to showcase their commitment and accountability in the fight against EVAWG. Under the theme "Consolidating Commitments Towards the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls," leaders united in their resolve to address this pervasive issue. The conference highlighted the collective responsibility to implement crucial declarations, with a focus on accountability for the [Kinshasa Declaration](#), [the Dakar Call to Action](#) and relevant AU Assembly decisions.



Prior to the Men's conference, the GIMAC Network held a CSO Consultative Meeting on Positive Masculinity, on October 16, 2023. The aim of the consultation was to strengthen the role and engagement of Civil Society Organizations and youth in the Initiative and ensure their active participation in the formulation and implementation of policies and programs related to gender equality and the prevention of VAWG. The role of CSOs in promoting positive masculinity cannot be ignored. CSOs implement a wide range of programs and initiatives to engage men and

boys in promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women and girls. This expertise is invaluable for designing and implementing effective programs to engage men and boys in support of the AU EVAWG Convention. CSOs also work in a variety of settings, including schools, workplaces, and religious communities. This allows them to reach a wide range of men and boys with messages about EVAWG prevention and response. CSOs also advocate for policies and programs that support men and boys' engagement in EVAWG prevention and response.

Therefore its important for CSOs, youth movements, young women networks and all stakeholders to support the African Union (AU) in the adoption, implementation, and enforcement of the AU Convention to End Violence Against Women and Girls (AU EVAWG Convention).





## The 4th High level Africa forum on Women, Peace and Security, Addis Ababa

The 4th High-Level Africa Forum on Women, Peace, and Security was held on 13th to 14th December. This two-day gathering was an affirmation of the inherent right of women to actively contribute to shaping Africa's vision and, more importantly, a recognition of the pivotal role both men and women play in safeguarding lasting peace on the continent where women can thrive and succeed.

Historically, women have been the unsung heroes of peace building efforts in Africa. Operating predominantly at the grassroots level, they have demonstrated an extraordinary ability to bring communities together, foster dialogue, and address the root causes of conflicts. The unique perspectives and experiences they bring to the table offer invaluable insights into preventing and resolving conflicts.

A myriad of African and global policies and frameworks highlights the essential link between women's empowerment and peace and security. However, the stark reality persists—women remain a minority in crucial roles such as peace negotiators, envoys, mediators, and peacekeepers. This disconcerting gap served as a focal point during the forum, shedding light on the disparities between envisioned provisions and the current circumstances.

Distinguished leaders, including H.E. Sahle Zewde-Worke, President of Ethiopia, lent their voices to the dialogue. President Zewde-Worke urged African women to share their stories, she highlighted the urgent need for their involvement in addressing security threats across the continent. H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, reaffirmed the AU's commitment to advancing the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda. Acknowledging achievements, he underscored the necessity for continued efforts, echoing the sentiment that more needs to be done.

Former President of Liberia and Patron of AWLN, H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, called for a new collective security vision that addresses a broader spectrum of risks. She stressed that women should no longer plead for inclusion but actively shape crucial processes in the face of global challenges.

H.E Bineta Diop, AU Commission Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, highlighted the ineffectiveness of existing conflict prevention measures due to the exclusion of women. Urging leaders to support women's initiatives in regions facing crises, she advocated for the inclusion of Sudanese women in peace efforts.

In peace processes, including women is vital for effectively addressing gender-based violence. Women's unique perspectives and experiences empower them to advocate for women's rights, contribute to the prevention and response to sexual violence, and ensure that legal frameworks and resource allocation adequately address the root causes. Their participation fosters trust in institutions and amplifies community-led efforts, promoting a more sustainable and just post-conflict environment.





# Legal instruments and policies to check out.

A young woman that reads, is a young woman that stays informed!. Check out the instruments below

- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
- Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA)
- AU Strategy for Gender Equality & Womens Empowerment.
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).







*She*  
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# STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



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