ONLINE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
DIAGNOSTIC TOOLKIT

Measuring, Understanding, and Responding to Online Violence Against Politically Active Women
Online Violence Against Women (OVAW) Diagnostic

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Disclaimer: This publication was made possible through the support provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID.

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Guidance for Evaluators

OVAW Diagnostic Tool Overview
The CEPPS Online Violence against Women (OVAW) Diagnostic Tool is an important element to shape a comprehensive CEPPS approach to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment. The diagnostic tool contains the following components: 1) a survey for women internet users to collect quantitative data; 2) a focus group discussion guide to collect qualitative data, both with the goal of understanding and measuring online violence against women; 3) a key informant interview guide for the same purpose; 4) an internal guide for CEPPS staff and consultants on interviewing survivors of violence and trauma; and 5) a glossary of key terms. These three data collection methods (survey, key informant interviews, focus groups/groups interviews) can be used all together or individually, as needed. This OVAW diagnostic is part of CEPPS’ inclusive monitoring, evaluation and learning (IMEL) suite of tools, which supports the inclusive collection and analysis of data related to inclusion, equity, and marginalized populations.

OVAW Diagnostic Tool Purpose
While there may be additional uses of this tool specific to a program, broadly this assessment aims to:
- Understand how online violence affects women active in politics and civic life;
- Serve as a tool to inform evidence-based advocacy on topics related to online violence;
- Inform the design and implementation of CEPPS programming to increase women’s political participation by combatting online violence against women in politics; and
- Support institutions, including political parties, election commissions, government agencies, and others, to effectively combat online violence against women.

Because the tool is meant to understand women’s experiences with online violence, the participants for these tools are primarily women. You might conduct key informant interviews with men who work on online violence against women or who are part of institutions that have a mandate to prevent online violence against women. If you are interested in comparing data on women’s and men’s experiences of online violence, you may include male participants in your data collection and compare responses. If you are conducting focus groups with men, it is important not to mix women and men in the same focus group, as members of one or both groups might not feel comfortable discussing their experiences with online violence in a mixed setting.
Overall Approach
A fundamental element to CEPPS’ technical approach to inclusion is ensuring that we work to consider all people in our program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This approach means considering how people from different backgrounds and people who identify with multiple marginalized groups and thus may experience compounding forms of discrimination might experience different barriers and levels of access to political and electoral participation. As such, the diagnostic tool should be used to identify and understand the differences that may exist between and among different groups of women. These differences are important to understand to derive relevant context-specific and comprehensive recommendations based on the data collected. For example, it is not enough to outline the barriers that “women” and “people with disabilities” face with online violence, as this is likely to capture only certain sub-sections of those groups. It is essential to also understand the unique and compounded discrimination that women with disabilities, as distinct from women without disabilities or men with disabilities, face because of their intersecting social identities. Without considering the unique challenges of different groups of women, any analysis would be incomplete. Therefore, an effective program intervention to prevent and combat online violence against women with disabilities may require a somewhat different approach than programming for women without disabilities or men with disabilities.

Importantly, while the components of the diagnostic and broad lines of inquiry within each implementation of the tool may vary somewhat according to the scope of the project, we have provided a collection of the key and most commonly used topic areas and questions. This tool is based on CEPPS IMEL approaches and builds on existing components of well-established tools and programmatic approaches from CEPPS/IFES, CEPPS/IRI and CEPPS/NDI.

Implementation Guidance
Desk Research and Local Consultations
The survey questions and questions as part of the focus group and key informant interview guides should be tailored to the local context based on initial desk research and consultations with local partners/activists and the in-country team (if applicable). Before starting interviews or focus groups, CEPPS staff or consultants should consult the CEPPS guidance document for interviewing survivors of violence and trauma and glossary of key terms and should follow up with the relevant gender and inclusion experts at their organization if any questions arise before the data collection begins. Additional guidance is provided in the document for each tool.
Survey
This survey questionnaire is designed for women participants who are active in political and civic life to better understand their experiences with online violence. The survey should be administered via an online survey client, as the topic of the survey is online violence (and thus participants would have to already have access to the internet and use it with relative frequency to be eligible/able to answer a survey on this topic).

Focus Group/Group Interview Guide
The focus group/group interview guide may be used individually or in conjunction with the survey questionnaire to gather further information about the survey findings. If no survey is being conducted, it is important that desk research and consultations with local partners/activists and the in-country team (if applicable) be conducted in advance of interviews to help guide the practitioner to focus on particular topics or to listen for specific information within the established set of questions.

Focus groups and small group discussions provide a safe space for women to present more detailed and nuanced testimonies of their experiences that might not otherwise come out if raised in a more public forum. Focus groups can be one of the most effective ways to gather qualitative information on a particular issue. Usually small in size (seven to 10 people), focus groups are a moderator-led discussion about the participants’ experiences, feelings, and preferences about a topic. An ideal focus group is semi-structured, i.e., the moderator covers topics according to the guide, but the conversation flows somewhat freely, and the moderator adjusts the questions according to participants’ contribution. The discussion should not just flow between the moderator and the participants, but also among the participants themselves; the group dynamic is part of what matters for focus groups.

Additional guidance for focus groups includes:

- Focus group research must employ a rigorous design, be conducted by an experienced moderator, and base findings on complete records i.e., transcripts or recordings and an objective framework for analysis and culminate in a formal report or presentation.
- The moderator should be from the same country as the participants, as it is advisable that s/he speak the language of discussion the same way as the participants in order not to be considered “the other” or “an outsider.” If a group discussion does not meet these criteria, it should be called a “group interview.”

If focus groups must take place virtually, practitioners should account for the following key considerations:

- **Maintaining confidentiality.** Before beginning, the implementor must decide whether or not to record the conversation. While recording the conversation might make participants feel less at ease and be less willing to share, having a transcript of the discussion means that it can be analyzed more closely and in a more nuanced way after the discussion ends. Transcripts can be created from audio or video recordings with the informed consent of all participants and should be stored securely. This is by no means a necessity and should
only be pursued if the program has the resources to conclude an external contract with a transcription service. Regardless of whether the conversation is recorded, participants and facilitators must agree to not share other’s experiences, take photos or videos of the participants, disclose who participated in the program, or act in any other way that could put a participant at risk.

- **Back-up plans.** Within the program design should be a plan of action if someone drops off the call or stops responding. This plan should include working with the people in the program to decide who will call back, how much time they should wait before doing so, and/or whether they should initiate contact.

- **Data security.** There should be minimal collection of the participants’ identifying information. Any paper documents that identify participants by name (or other recognizable information) should not be kept at the facilitator’s home; facilitators should also avoid keeping paper notes on conversations with participants. To avoid this, program staff or facilitators should use numbers or code names to identify people in paperwork instead of their actual names.

- **Digital security.** All types of communication software have vulnerabilities that must be acknowledged and understood so that they can be avoided. Platforms that offer safety features like end-to-end encryption, “zero knowledge” encryption, and/or two-factor authentication should be used to further protect security and confidentiality. Additionally, programs should use platforms that do not require the participants to create an account or profile if possible.

### Key Informant Interview Guide

As with the focus group/group interview guide, the key informant interview guide can be used individually or in conjunction with the survey questionnaire. Again, if no survey is being conducted, it is important that desk research and consultations with local partners/activists and the in-country team (if applicable) are critical. In some cases, participants might not feel comfortable discussing the topic of online violence and harassment in a group setting. If this is the case, it is advisable to conduct individual interviews with women activists, election officials, candidates, journalists, civil society leaders and/or parliamentarians to understand their experiences with online violence. In addition to the focus group/group interview guide, the key informant interview guide can provide support for this type of data collection. In addition to or instead of with survivors, key informant interviews can also take place with local experts, academics, practitioners, or other gender-based violence specialists. The same guidance above applies to interviews that must take place virtually.

### Next Steps

Once complete, findings from the diagnostic suite of tools should be analyzed and can be presented in a more informal way, as a bulleted list or PowerPoint presentation, or written as a part of a public report. Findings could also be integrated into baseline evaluations or gender assessments, with the results being used to guide CEPPS support to key project stakeholders. For example, results of the analysis could be used to inform programming with: election commissions on integrating considerations of online violence against women in elections into their media...
monitoring efforts; political parties on elaborating codes of conduct, and/or with domestic election observers as they monitor the online environment. In this way, CEPPS will be able to more effectively integrate OVAW into programming and to implement evidenced-based programming specific to OVAW.
### Glossary of Key Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example (if necessary)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Closed platform       | Online services that are not open to the public, including groups and messaging services                                                                                                                    | Closed/Private Facebook Groups  
Secret Telegram Channels |
| Deep fake             | A video of a person in which their face or body has been digitally altered using “deep learning technology” so that they appear to be someone else, typically used maliciously or to spread false information  
Deep fakes go beyond typical photoshopping and other manipulated media; the best are undetectable to the human eye. | Videos that appear to be of Barack Obama on TikTok but are artificially engineered videos that have replicated his appearance and voice.  
Currently over 95% of existing deep fakes are nonconsensual deep fake pornography of women. |
| Disinformation        | False or misleading information that is created or disseminated with the intent to cause harm or to benefit the perpetrator                                                                                   | A rumor about a women’s sexual activity or photoshopping or “deep faking” pornography or nude photos.  
False narratives spread by individuals ahead of an election in order to harm a political candidate. |
<p>| Doxxing               | The publication of private or identifying information about an individual on the internet, typically with malicious intent                                                                                   |                                                                                       |
| Gendered disinformation | A subset of online gendered abuse that uses false, misleading, or harmful content that exploits gender inequalities or invokes gender stereotypes and norms, including to target specific individuals or groups | Narratives that claim a woman candidate is not fit for office because of her past romantic liaisons |
| Hate speech           | Abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice against a particular group, especially on the basis of race, religion, or sexual orientation                                                  |                                                                                       |
| Manipulated media     | Photos or videos that have been digitally altered, often using software                                                                                                                                  | A video of a political candidate that has been                                       |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misinformation</th>
<th>False or misleading information that is shared without the intent to cause harm or realization that it is incorrect. In some cases, actors may unknowingly perpetuate the spread of disinformation by sharing content they believe to be accurate or interesting within their networks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online messaging/communications service</td>
<td>Internet-based communications services that allow messaging, video, and phone calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public platform</td>
<td>Social media services that are publicly accessible by default</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trolling</td>
<td>Posting inflammatory, insincere, digressive, extraneous, or off-topic messages in an online community with the intent of provoking emotional responses or silencing a target</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus Group Discussion Guide

Purpose
The following questions are intended to be asked during focus group discussions to understand women’s experiences with online violence and harassment, including hate speech, violent language, harmful gender stereotypes, or sexualized depictions of women.

Conducting qualitative research through focus groups to complement quantitative survey data is integral to understanding the full scope of the problem. Talking to the people who have experienced this violence can help understand how the trends that are identified in the public online domain are connected and interwoven with other incidents happening in private online space and/or in the real world. Pairing the quantitative survey data with qualitative research underscores and contextualizes the disproportionate impacts that this violence has on the political engagement of women.

Focus Group Participants
Participants for focus groups can include women candidates, civic leaders, and regular social media users, who may have seen or experienced online harassment and violence. Gender-based violence service providers may also be consulted if they deal with online harassment. As some of these women are often high profile, they are not always available or willing to be in focus groups with other participants, but interviews or focus groups with their staff can provide helpful insight. Focus groups with women who are active on social media can also be helpful; understanding how online violence and harassment targeted at high-profile women affects their participation shows the wide-reaching impacts that online violence can have. It’s recommended that focus groups include 10 to 12 participants and last 60 to 90 minutes.

Do No Harm Approach
When speaking with survivors of violence, it is critical to be careful of your word choice and your language. It is important to understand that violence online is equal to, and sometimes can have an even greater impact than, violence offline. Survivors often go through the same psychological trauma and face real threats in both instances. Therefore, it’s important to talk to survivors in a safe environment, create trust, use respect, and avoid judging and making assumptions (source). For focus groups with survivors of violence, there should be an experienced counselor in all focus group discussions who can support the participants if any of them are re-traumatized or need psychosocial support during the discussion.

Some tips on how to talk with survivors of violence (source) include:
- Understand that the survivor may be dealing with trauma, which may cause them to act strangely or exhibit physical distress;
- Recognize that violence is never the fault of the survivor;
- Use sensitivity and focus on the survivor’s needs during the conversation;
- Respect any steps the survivor may have already taken.

Given the nature of the topic, before the focus group, participants should be notified that they will be discussing instances of violence. This content can be traumatizing or act as a trigger for the women and men who experience this type of violence. Ensure the well-being of focus group participants by offering opportunities to address emotional reactions and respecting their right to withdraw.

Some recommended phrases to use when talking to survivors of online violence are (source):
- “I believe you. / It took a lot of courage to tell me about this.” It can be extremely difficult for survivors to share their story. They may feel ashamed, concerned that they won’t be believed, or worried they’ll be blamed. Be careful not to interpret calmness as a sign that the event did not occur—everyone responds to traumatic events differently. The best thing you can do is to believe them.
- “It’s not your fault. / You didn’t do anything to deserve this.” Survivors may blame themselves, especially if they know the perpetrator personally. Remind the survivor, maybe even more than once, that they are not to blame.
- “I’m sorry this happened. / This shouldn’t have happened to you.” Acknowledge that the experience has affected their life. Phrases like “This must be really tough for you,” and, “I’m so glad you are sharing this with me,” help to communicate empathy.

Privacy and Protection of Data
Data from focus groups should be stored in a secure location, either on SharePoint, in Dropbox, or in Google Drive, all of which have security features. All laptops that contain data should have password protections and should not connect to unsecured wireless internet connections.

Recording Focus Groups
Focus groups can be audio recorded, but you must receive permission from participants first. In some country contexts, audio recording focus groups may act as a deterrent for those participating, so keep that in mind when deciding how to best collect data. Regardless of whether there is audio recording of the session, it is critical to take detailed notes, including direct quotations, when possible. Though these quotations will not be attributed directly to an individual – unless specified – having direct language can add impact to report findings.

Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions
You can use the following questions to structure your focus group discussions or interviews. The questions should be adapted depending on your audience. For example, if you are doing an interview with a woman who you know has been targeted by online violence, you can skip some of the more general questions, unless you need this information.
All focus groups or interviews can open with the following language:

“Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group/interview. [CEPPS/IFES/IRI/NDI] is a US-based non-profit, independent organization that works to support inclusive democracy around the world. As stated when you were contacted to participate, the purpose of the study is to discuss online violence and harassment against women in politics.

Your participation will consist of participating in this focus group, which will last between XXX and XXX minutes. You will not be asked for classified or confidential information. You are under no obligation to participate, and if you choose to participate you may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences.

The information you share in the interviews will remain strictly confidential. Anonymity will be protected in the data collection, data cleaning, and dissemination of research results to ensure external confidentiality of your identity. The data collected – including any audio recordings, transcripts and the researcher’s field notes – will be kept in a secure manner.

We are going to talk today about negative comments women sometimes receive on social media. Specifically, we will be talking about instances of online harassment or violence against women who are participating in politics or in civic engagement. Learning about your experiences helps us to understand how women experience online violence and harassment in [COUNTRY] and helps us develop recommendations on steps to mitigate and end this violence.

Given that we will be discussing harassment and violence, this conversation may contain language and discussion that is vulgar and offensive, you may always leave or decline to participate in part or all of the session.”

**Definition**: Online violence and harassment includes a broad range or abusive, harassing, degrading and violent language circulating on the internet, text messages across a range of intensities, from sexist slurs to direct threats of physical harm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social media and online communications use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What social media and online communication platforms do you use (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)? Are there any specific platforms specific to [COUNTRY] or the region that you use?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online harassment and violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Have you ever experienced online harassment or violence personally (see definition below)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CEPPS ONLINE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN DIAGNOSTIC
[Explain what this means: insults, threats, degrading comments or images, trolling, etc. It is possible that participants will talk about multiple instances of online violence in their responses; aim to achieve a free-flowing discussion and follow up with these questions as necessary for more clarification. Do not feel that you need to ask each individual question listed below.]

- Can you describe what happened?
- Did you experience it in a public forum (via tweets, public Facebook posts, etc.) or in a closed forum (private messages on social media apps, WhatsApp, etc.)?
- Who were the perpetrators?
- Did you feel the behavior was coordinated among perpetrators?
- Do you think you were targeted due to your political participation? Why or why not?
- Was this the first time it happened? Has it happened more than once?
- How did you respond? How did it make you feel (scared? angry? sad? embarrassed? indifferent?) Did you use the platform’s reporting tools to report the behavior?
- For about how long would you say the incident lasted (was it a few hours? Days? Weeks?) How long after the initial incident did you continue to receive harmful messages?
- On what platform did the incident initially take place (Facebook? Twitter?) Did it spread to different platforms? Which ones?
- Did it spread from social media to other online communications (private text messages, calls, WhatsApp, etc.)? Did it spread offline (were there any physical or real-world consequences?)

4. What would you say were the impacts of the experience on you? On your work? On your family?

5. Can you describe a time you heard about or observed others experiencing online harassment or violence?
   - Who were the targets of the harassment?
   - Can you give examples of what happened?

6. In the cases just mentioned, were there specific insults or threats that perpetrators used?
   - Can you give examples?
   - Are these insults/threats specific to your culture? What do they mean, and why are they hurtful?

7. When online abuse like this happens, how is it shared - broadly? Does it spread quickly? Please explain.
   - Are the rumors and negative attacks that are discussed online also discussed on radio, television, or other mainstream platforms?
   - Do you think that these attacks on women include misinformation or disinformation (i.e. including narratives that are false or misleading)?

Definitions:
- **Disinformation** is false or misleading information that is created or disseminated with the intent to cause harm or to benefit the perpetrator. In the space of online violence against
women, this can include a rumor about a women’s sexual activity or photoshopping or “deep faking” pornography or nudes, for example.

- **Misinformation** is false or misleading information that is shared without the intent to cause harm or realization that it is incorrect. In some cases, actors may unknowingly perpetuate the spread of disinformation by sharing content they believe to be accurate or interesting within their networks.

8. How do women from other marginalized groups (women with disabilities, young women, older women, LGBTQI+, women from minority religions or ethnicities, etc.) experience online violence? Are these experiences similar or different to your own?

*Note to facilitator: You can ask about women from specific marginalized groups depending on country context. For example, in Guatemala, the facilitator could ask: do women from Indigenous communities experience online violence differently?*

9. Can you give examples of men in politics experiencing online violence?

- Do men experience online violence differently than how women experience it?
- Are the comments/words/phrases used differently? OR Do comments directed at men mean different things when directed at women?
- Is the violence/harassment spread or amplified in the same way?

10. How has the online violence you have experienced or seen impacted your willingness or ability to participate in politics?

Other questions to consider, if time allows:

- If this were to happen to you or to a friend, what do you think your response would be? Do you feel prepared to deal with a campaign like this?
- Would you feel comfortable asking for help from the police? Who else would you ask for help to deal with a problem like this?
- Do you know of any cases where a woman has brought a formal complaint to authorities about an act like this? (Follow up if yes:) What happened, how did the authorities respond?
- If you experienced harassment or online violence like this as part of your work for a political party or civic group, how did your party or group react? Did they offer any support?
- If you were to experience another incident of online aggression like this, how would you respond differently?
- In your opinion, what needs to happen to end this problem? Have you heard of/are you involved in any initiatives to address this issue (please describe)? What has been effective? Are there some approaches that have been tried and are unsuccessful?
- What do you feel you need, personally, to be better equipped to deal with hostile online behavior?
- Have you ever talked to male family members, friends or colleagues about the issue of toxic online behavior? What is their reaction? How can men play an active role in addressing this issue?
Survey

Survey Guidance
This survey questionnaire is designed for women participants who are active in political and civic life to better understand their experiences with online violence. The survey should be administered via an online survey client, as the topic of the survey is online violence (and thus participants would have to already have access to the internet and use it with relative frequency to be eligible/able to answer a survey on this topic). For an online survey, the length of time for a participant to complete it should be 10 to 15 minutes, so the questions below will likely need to be cut down, depending on the goals of the survey and the country context. Implementors should always consult with their monitoring and evaluation experts before administering the survey.

Survey Questions

Q1. How interested are you in matters of politics and government?
   1. Very interested
   2. Somewhat interested
   3. Not too interested
   4. Not at all interested
   8. Don’t know

Q2. [If answered 1-5 for Q2] How often do you use the Internet?
   1. Every day or almost every day
   2. A few times a week
   3. Once a week
   4. Once a month
   5. Less than once a month
   6. Never
   8. Don’t know

Q3. Which device do you use to access the Internet? [Select all that apply]
   1. Personal computer
   2. Public computer
   3. Work computer
   4. Personal smart phone
   5. Family member’s smart phone
   6. Other: ______________
Q4. How often do you use social media?

1. Every day or almost every day
2. A few times a week
3. Once a week
4. Once a month
5. Less than once a month
6. Never

[IF 6 to both Q2 and Q4, proceed to D1]

Q5. [If answered 1-5 for Q4] Which device do you use to access social media? [Select all that apply]

1. Personal computer
2. Public computer
3. Work computer
4. Personal smart phone
5. Family member’s smart phone
6. Other: ______________
8. Don’t know

Q6. [If answered 1-5 for Q4] Which social media platforms do you use? [Select all that apply]

1. Facebook
2. YouTube
3. Twitter
4. Instagram
5. LinkedIn
6. TikTok
7. Messengers (WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal)
8. Other: _______________
9. Don’t know

Q7. [For each answer 1-8 in Q6] Is your profile on [platform] set to:

1. Public
2. Private
3. Don’t know

Q8. [If 1-8 to Q4] What are the main reason you use social media?

1. Stay in touch with friends and relatives
2. Stay up to date on news and information
3. Follow topics of interest to you
4. To engage in the political process
5. Provide a platform to share my views
6. Other: _________________________
8. Don’t know

Q9. [If 1-8 to Q4] What is the second most important reason you use social media?

1. Stay in touch with friends and relatives
2. Stay up to date on news and information
3. Follow topics of interest to you
4. To engage in the political process
5. Provide a platform to share my views
6. Other: _________________________
8. Don’t know

Q10. [If 1-8 to Q4] What is the third most important reason you use social media?

1. Stay in touch with friends and relatives
2. Stay up to date on news and information
3. Follow topics of interest to you
4. To engage in the political process
5. Provide a platform to share my views
6. Other: _________________________
8. Don’t know

Q11. [Ask all] To what extent do you feel free or restricted in doing the following actions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Completely free</th>
<th>Somewhat free</th>
<th>Somewhat restricted</th>
<th>Completely restricted</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Posting photos of yourself on social media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Expressing your views on critical social and political issues to family members, neighbors or friends in in-person discussions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Associating with persons of your own choosing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q12. In general, do you think that women in [COUNTRY] should have their social media profiles set to public or private?

1. Public
2. Private
3. It depends
4. It doesn’t matter to me
8. Don’t know

Q13. Do you feel that most men in [COUNTRY] should have their social media profiles set to public or private?

1. Public
2. Private
3. It depends
4. It doesn’t matter to me
8. Don’t know

Q14. Please indicate the degree to which you either agree or disagree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. I use social media to engage more effectively in the political processes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Social media is an effective tool for women to use to engage in politics.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Social media is an effective tool for women to use to engage in social or political causes that are important to them.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. The news I read on social media is reliable and accurate.  

E. Women in public life are represented fairly in traditional media.  

F. Women’s political issues are represented fairly in traditional media.  

G. Women in public life are represented fairly on social media.  

H. Women’s political issues are represented fairly in traditional media.  

Q15. How confident are you that you can identify news and information that is deliberately false?  

1. Very confident I can identify  
2. Somewhat confident I can identify  
3. Not too confident I can identify  
4. Not confident at all I can identify  
8. Don’t know  

Q16. Have you experienced online harassment and/or violence? Online violence and harassment include a broad range or abusive, harassing, degrading and violent language circulating on the internet, text messages across a range of intensities (from sexist slurs to direct threats of physical harm).  

1. Yes  
2. No  
8. Don’t know  

[IF 2 or 8 to Q16, proceed to Q19]

Q17. How often have you experienced online harassment and/or violence? Remember: Online violence and harassment includes a broad range or abusive, harassing, degrading and violent language circulating on the internet, text messages across a range of intensities (from sexist slurs to direct threats of physical harm).  

1. Every day or almost every day  
2. A few times a week
3. Once a week
4. Once a month
5. Less than once a month
6. Never
8. Don’t know

Q18. If you have experienced online violence, have you ever:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Reported content or users for bad behavior to social media platforms (i.e., blocked/muted/or reported content or accounts)?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Reported online violence or harassment to law enforcement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Reported online violence or harassment to your organization (political party/CSO) or employer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q19. If you or a friend or colleague experienced online violence, would you feel comfortable asking for help from the police?
1. Yes
2. No
8. Don’t know

Q20A. Have you personally, ever faced any of the following situations?
Q20B. [For each, if yes to Q20A] Which of these best describes the forum where it occurred?
Q20C. [For each, if yes to Q20A] Which of the following, if any, was the result of the interaction you had? [Select all that apply] Definition to include for 20C: *Activism is working to bring about political or social change in your community through protesting, organizing community meetings, running for office, and other similar activities.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychosocial violence</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Q20B. [check all that apply]</th>
<th>Q20C. [check all that apply]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Have you been insulted online based on what you posted on social media?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Go to B</td>
<td>1. Public forum on a public page</td>
<td>1. I closed my account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Go to B</td>
<td>2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved</td>
<td>2. I stopped posting on my account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Go to B</td>
<td>3. On my private account</td>
<td>3. I stopped participating in activism online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Go to B</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. I stopped participating in activism offline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Go to B</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. I became more reserved in my online posting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Go to B</td>
<td></td>
<td>6. I was ostracized from my family</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> Have you ever been attacked for your physical appearance online? (e.g. name calling, body shaming, the clothes you are wearing)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Go to C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Through private direct messages</td>
<td>7. I was ostracized from my community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. a public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram</td>
<td>8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I did not change any of my behavior online</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Other: _____________</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<p>| <strong>C.</strong> Has your level of intelligence ever been insulted online? | 1 | Go to D. |
| 1. Public forum on a public page | 1. I closed my account |
| 2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved | 2. I stopped posting on my account |
| 3. On my private account | 3. I stopped participating in activism online |
| 4. Through private direct messages | 4. I stopped participating in activism offline |
| 5. a public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram | 5. I became more reserved in my online posting |
| 6. I was ostracized from my family |
| 7. I was ostracized from my community |
| 8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower) |
| 9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police) |
| 10. I did not change any of my behavior online |
| 11. Other: _____________ |</p>
<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. Have you been insulted online based on your actual or perceived morality, sexuality, ethnicity, religious beliefs, decisions about parenthood, or marital status?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1 | 1. **Public forum on a public page**  
   2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved  
   3. On my private account  
   4. Through private messages  
   5. a public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram | 1. I closed my account  
   2. I stopped posting on my account  
   3. I stopped participating in activism online  
   4. I stopped participating in activism offline  
   5. I became more reserved in my online posting  
   6. I was ostracized from my family  
   7. I was ostracized from my community  
   8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)  
   9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)  
   10. I did not change any of my behavior online  
   11. Other: _______________ |
|   |   |   |
| **E. Have you been insulted online based on your actual or perceived morality or morals?** |   |   |
| 1 | 1. **Public forum on a public page**  
   2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved  
   3. On my private account  | 1. I closed my account  
   2. I stopped posting on my account  
   3. I stopped participating in activism online  
   4. I stopped participating in activism offline  
   5. I became more reserved in my online posting  
   6. I was ostracized from my family  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEPPS ONLINE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN DIAGNOSTIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>F. Have you been insulted online based on your actual or perceived sexual behaviors or sexual orientation?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Go to G.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4. Through private messages  
5. a public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram  
7. I was ostracized from my community  
8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)  
9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)  
10. I did not change any of my behavior online  
11. Other: ______________ |
| **G. Have you been insulted online based on your actual or perceived religious beliefs?** |
| **1.** Go to H. |
| 1. Public forum on a public page  
2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved  
3. On my private account  
4. Through private messages  
5. a public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram  
1. I closed my account  
2. I stopped posting on my account  
3. I stopped participating in activism online  
4. I stopped participating in activism offline  
5. I became more reserved in my online posting  
6. I was ostracized from my family  
7. I was ostracized from my community  
8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)  
9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)  
10. I did not change any of my behavior online  
11. Other: ______________ |
| H. Have you been insulted online based on your actual or perceived ethnicity? |
|---|---|
| 1. Public forum on a public page | 1. I closed my account |
| 2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved | 2. I stopped posting on my account |
| 3. On my private account | 3. I stopped participating in activism online |
| 4. Through private messages | 4. I stopped participating in activism offline |
| 5. A public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram | 5. I became more reserved in my online posting |
| 7. I was ostracized from my community | 6. I was ostracized from my family |
| 8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower) | 7. I was ostracized from my community |
| 9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police) | 8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower) |
| 10. I did not change any of my behavior online | 9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police) |
| 11. Other: _____________ | 10. I did not change any of my behavior online |

<p>| I. Have you been insulted online based on your actual or perceived marital status? |
|---|---|
| 1. Public forum on a public page | 1. I closed my account |
| 2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved | 2. I stopped posting on my account |
| 3. On my private account | 3. I stopped participating in activism online |
| 4. Through private messages | 4. I stopped participating in activism offline |
| 5. A public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram | 5. I became more reserved in my online posting |
| 6. I was ostracized from my family | 6. I was ostracized from my family |
| 7. I was ostracized from my community | 7. I was ostracized from my community |
| 8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower) | 8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower) |
| 9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police) | 9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police) |
| 10. I did not change any of my behavior online | 10. I did not change any of my behavior online |
| 11. Other: _____________ | 11. Other: _____________ |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>J. Have you been insulted online based on your decision to have children or to not have children?</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Go to K.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Through private messages</td>
<td>7. I was ostracized from my community</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. a public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram</td>
<td>8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)</td>
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<td>9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I did not change any of my behavior online</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Other: _____________</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K. Have you ever been impersonated online?</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Go to F.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Public forum on a public page</td>
<td>1. I closed my account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved</td>
<td>2. I stopped posting on my account</td>
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<td>3. On my private account</td>
<td>3. I stopped participating in activism online</td>
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<td>4. Through private messages</td>
<td>4. I stopped participating in activism offline</td>
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<td>5. a public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram</td>
<td>5. I became more reserved in my online posting</td>
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<td>6. I was ostracized from my family</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I was ostracized from my community</td>
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<td>8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I did not change any of my behavior online</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Other: _____________</td>
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</table>

<p>| Disinformation/misinformation/misinformation as online violence |
|---|---|
| Situation | Yes | No | Q14B. | Q14C. |
| K. Have you ever been impersonated online? | 1 | Go to F. |
| 1. Public forum on a public page | 1. I closed my account |
| 2. A semi-private page where posts | 2. I stopped posting on my account |
| must be approved | 3. I stopped participating in activism online |
| 4. Through private messages | 4. I stopped participating in activism offline |
| 5. a public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram | 5. I became more reserved in my online posting |
| 6. I was ostracized from my family |
| 7. I was ostracized from my community |
| 8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower) |
| 9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police) |
| 10. I did not change any of my behavior online |
| 11. Other: _____________ |</p>
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<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L. Have you had photos of you shared online without your consent?</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. Have pictures of you been manipulated online</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Public forum on a public page
2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved
3. On my private account
4. Through private messages
5. A public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram

1. I closed my account
2. I stopped posting on my account
3. I stopped participating in activism online
4. I stopped participating in activism offline
5. I became more reserved in my online posting
6. I was ostracized from my family
7. I was ostracized from my community
8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)
9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)
10. I did not change any of my behavior online
11. Other: _____________

1. Go to G.
without your consent?

must be approved
3. On my private account
4. Through private direct messages
5. a public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram

1. I closed my account
2. I stopped posting on my account
3. I stopped participating in activism online
4. I stopped participating in activism offline
5. I became more reserved in my online posting
6. I was ostracized from my family
7. I was ostracized from my community
8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)
9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)
10. I did not change any of my behavior online
11. Other: ______________

N. Have you ever had false or misleading statements or rumors spread about you personally online?

1. Public forum on a public page
2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved
3. On my private account
4. Through private messages
5. a public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram

1. I stopped participating in activism offline
2. I became more reserved in my online posting
3. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)
4. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)
5. I did not change any of my behavior online
6. Other: ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threats of offline violence</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q14B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14C</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CEPPS ONLINE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN DIAGNOSTIC
| Q. Have you ever received online threats of physical violence directed at you? | 1. Public forum on a public page  
2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved  
3. On my private account  
4. Through private messages  
5. A public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram | 1. I closed my account  
2. I stopped posting on my account  
3. I stopped participating in activism online  
4. I stopped participating in activism offline  
5. I became more reserved in my online posting  
6. I was ostracized from my family  
7. I was ostracized from my community  
8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)  
9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)  
10. I did not change any of my behavior online  
11. Other: _____________ |
|---|---|---|
| P. Has anyone threatened your family or friends based on what you’ve posted online? | 1. Public forum on a public page  
2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved  
3. On my private account  
4. Through private messages  
5. A public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram | 1. I closed my account  
2. I stopped posting on my account  
3. I stopped participating in activism online  
4. I stopped participating in activism offline  
5. I became more reserved in my online posting  
6. I was ostracized from my family  
7. I was ostracized from my community  
8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)  
9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)  
10. I did not change any of my behavior online  
11. Other: _____________ |
| Q. Have you ever received threats of sexual violence? | 1. Public forum on a public page  
2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved  
3. On my private account  
4. Through private messages  
5. A public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram | 1. I closed my account  
2. I stopped posting on my account  
3. I stopped participating in activism online  
4. I stopped participating in activism offline  
5. I became more reserved in my online posting  
6. I was ostracized from my family  
7. I was ostracized from my community  
8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)  
9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)  
10. I did not change any of my behavior online  
11. Other: _____________ |
| R. Have you ever been insulted, harassed or threatened offline because of something said or shared online? | 1. Public forum on a public page  
2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved  
3. On my private account  
4. Through private messages  
5. A public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram | 1. I closed my account  
2. I stopped posting on my account  
3. I stopped participating in activism online  
4. I stopped participating in activism offline  
5. I became more reserved in my online posting  
6. I was ostracized from my family  
7. I was ostracized from my community  
8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)  
9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)  
10. I did not change any of my behavior online  
11. Other: _____________ |
S. Have you ever been doxxed (had your private personal information such as: address, phone number, or ID docs released publicly)?

| S. Have you ever been doxxed (had your private personal information such as: address, phone number, or ID docs released publicly)? | 1. Public forum on a public page | 1. I closed my account
| | 2. A semi-private page where posts must be approved | 2. I stopped posting on my account
| | 3. On my private account | 3. I stopped participating in activism online
| | 4. Through private messages | 4. I stopped participating in activism offline
| | 5. a public messaging channel such as on WhatsApp or Telegram | 5. I became more reserved in my online posting
| | Go to D1. | 6. I was ostracized from my family
| | | 7. I was ostracized from my community
| | | 8. I became more active on social media (like becoming even a stronger activist or a whistleblower)
| | | 9. I took an action to report the offender (like reporting the post or reporting the Facebook user to Facebook or to the authorities like police)
| | | 10. I did not change any of my behavior online
| | | 11. Other: _____________

[All demographic questions should be contextualized to the country/ies in which the survey is being administered.]

D1. Gender of respondent
   1. Woman
   2. Man
   3. Another gender not listed: _______________

D2. How old are you?
   1. ___________________________ [ENTER AGE IN YEARS]

D3. What is your current marital status?
   1. Single, never married
   2. Married
   3. Widowed
   4. Separated
   5. Divorced

D4. Do you have any children?
   1. Yes [ASK D4 b.]
   2. No [SKIP TO D5]
b. [IF YES] How many? _________________

D5. If you have any disability, please specify what disability you have: _________________

D6. What is the highest educational level that you have attained?
1. No literacy (doesn’t read and write)
2. Reads and writes (traditional education)
3. Primary
4. Intermediate
5. Secondary
6. Vocational
7. Some university-level education, without degree
8. University-level education, with degree or higher
99. Refused

D7. What is your current employment situation?
1. Employed full time [ASK D8]
2. Employed part-time at one job [ASK D8]
3. Employed part-time at more than one job [ASK D8]
4. Self-employed [ASK D8]
5. Unemployed, looking for work [ASK D9]
6. Unemployed, not looking for work [SKIP TO D9]
7. Retired [SKIP TO D9]
8. Student [SKIP TO D9]
9. Housewife [SKIP TO D9]
10. Herder [SKIP TO D8]
98. Don’t Know [SKIP TO D9]
99. No Answer/Refused [SKIP TO D9]

D8. What is your occupation?
1. Manager – Government
2. Manager – Private Sector
3. Employee – Government
4. Employee – Private Sector
5. Private Sector Business owner
6. Technician and associate professional
7. Clerical support worker
8. Service and sales worker
9. Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery worker
10. Craft and related trades worker
11. Plant and machine operator, and assembler
12. Teaching occupation
13. Healthcare
14. Armed forces occupation
15. Other, specify: ______________
98. Don’t know
99. Refused

D9. Do you live in [COUNTRY CAPITAL]?
   1. Yes
   2. No [ASK D9 b.]

   b. [IF NO] Which province do you live in? ______________
Key Informant Interview Guide

Preparing for the Interview
This tool is for evaluating women’s experiences with online violence and harassment, including hate speech, violent language, harmful gender stereotypes or sexualized depictions of women. (For definitions, see the glossary of key terms.) It is intended to be completed within an interview setting. Using the following questions, the interviewer should probe for detailed information and solicit specific examples to provide as complete an answer as possible. The interviewer has a responsibility to adequately cover all prepared questions within the time allotted.

Throughout the interview, the interviewer’s role is to guide the discussion toward these subjects to get the relevant information. The interviewer has a responsibility to encourage the interviewee to answer the questions and explain their answers, as much as they feel comfortable. Interviewees should never be compelled to answer questions if they feel uncomfortable. Some helpful ways to get more complete responses include:
- “Can you talk about that more?”
- “Help me understand what you mean.”
- “Do you feel comfortable giving an example?”

It is good interview practice to paraphrase and summarize long, complex, or ambiguous comments and then repeat that summary back to the interviewee. This technique demonstrates active listening and ensures that the interviewee’s intended answer has been clearly understood. The interviewer must remain neutral throughout the interview, refraining from making faces/raising eyebrows, agreeing/disagreeing, or praising/denigrating any comment made by the interviewee.

Interview Participants
Participants for interviews may include women elected officials, political leaders, candidates, civic leaders, and regular social media users who may have seen or experienced online harassment and violence. Experts, including gender-based violence service providers, may also be consulted if they work on issues related to online harassment; these might include academics, practitioners, service providers, etc. For high profile interviewees who may be unavailable to interview directly, such as politicians, interviews/focus groups with their staff can provide helpful insight.

Do No Harm Approach
When speaking with survivors of violence, it is critical to be careful of your word choice and your language. It is important to understand that violence online is equal to, and sometimes has an even greater impact than, violence offline. Survivors often go through the same psychological trauma and face real threats in both instances. Therefore, it’s important to talk to survivors in a safe environment, create trust, use respect and avoid judging and making assumptions (source). For interviews with survivors of violence, there should be an experienced counselor in all
interviews who can support the interviewee if she is re-traumatized or needs any psychosocial support during the discussion.

Some tips on how to talk with survivors of violence (source) include:

- Understand that the survivor may be dealing with trauma, which can cause them to act in unanticipated ways or exhibit physical distress;
- Recognize that violence is never the fault of the survivor;
- Use sensitivity, and focus on the survivor's needs during the conversation;
- Respect any steps the survivor has already taken to handle the impact or harm of the abuse.

Given the nature of the topic, the conversation could include vulgar and offensive language. Before the interview, participants should be notified that they will be discussing instances of violence. This content can be traumatizing or act as a trigger for the women and men who experience this type of violence. Ensure the well-being of interviewees by offering opportunities to address emotional reactions and respecting their right to withdraw.

Some recommended phrases to use when talking to survivors of online violence are (source):

- “I believe you. / It took a lot of courage to tell me about this.” It can be extremely difficult for survivors to share their story. They may feel ashamed, concerned that they won’t be believed, or worried they’ll be blamed. Be careful not to interpret calmness as a sign that the event did not occur—everyone responds to traumatic events differently. The best thing you can do is to believe them.
- “It’s not your fault. / You didn’t do anything to deserve this.” Survivors may blame themselves, especially if they know the perpetrator personally. Remind the survivor, maybe even more than once, that they are not to blame.
- “I’m sorry this happened. / This shouldn’t have happened to you.” Acknowledge that the experience has affected their life. Phrases like “This must be really tough for you,” and, “I’m so glad you are sharing this with me,” help to communicate empathy.

You should also prepare a resource list for each interviewee in case they want to seek help or support after the interview concludes. The trauma-informed counselor that should be present during interviews might be able to provide this list or other referrals, should the survivor request or need this. This list can include local women’s organizations, health centers, or information on how to seek justice or accountability, based on what is appropriate for the country and local context. Copies should be carried and then given to each participant at the end of the interview, explaining that while we cannot address every need ourselves, we do want to make sure those we speak with are connected to services they may need. Something the size of a business card is easy for survivors to carry. Confirm the service providers’ contact details are accurate and actively working.

For additional information on this Do No Harm approach and how it should be implemented, please refer to the guidance document on interviewing survivors of violence and trauma.
Privacy and Protection of Data
Data from interviews should be stored in a secure location, either on SharePoint, in Dropbox, or in Google Drive, all of which have security features. All laptops that contain data should have password protections and should not connect to unsecured wireless internet connections.

Recording Interviews
Interviews maybe audio recorded, but you must receive permission from participants first. In some country contexts, audio recording interviews may act as a deterrent for those participating, so keep that in mind when deciding how to best collect data. Regardless of whether there is audio recording of the session, it is critical to take detailed notes, including direct quotations, when possible. Though these quotations will not be attributed directly to an individual – unless specified – having direct language can add impact to report findings.

Interview Information
Prior to beginning the interview, please fill in the below information, as applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Interviewee:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date and Time of Interview:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location of Interview:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Interviewer:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender of Interviewee:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region of Interviewee:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approximate Age Range of Interviewee:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupation of Interviewee (if applicable):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Status of Interviewee:</td>
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<td>Political Party of Interviewee (if applicable):</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBTQI+ (yes/no) (at the discretion of program team, taking into account the sociocultural situation in the country):</td>
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<td>Ethnicity/race (at the discretion of program team, taking into account the sociocultural situation in the country):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Notes/Comments:</td>
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Interviewer Welcome and Introduction
Please give the following welcome and introduction to the interviewee. This introduction is important to ensure each interviewee is aware of the purpose and other important information
about the interview. If you have an assistant interviewer taking notes, please indicate their name and the role they will be playing as indicated in the first paragraph below.

“Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. We recognize that you are busy and we thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. My name is [YOUR NAME] and I will be guiding our discussion today. This interview is one part of an assessment of online violence against women in politics organized by [NAME OF ORGANIZATION]. The assessment aims to better understand women’s experiences with online violence and harassment, especially in their efforts to participate in political and public life. The information gathered during this assessment will be used to identify actions and recommendations that practitioners can take to address online violence against women in politics and support women’s political participation. Your input is invaluable and so we would like you to be as open, honest, and accurate in your comments as you can. Of course, some of the content of the discussion may be difficult, and you are in no way obligated to speak if you do not feel comfortable.

Everything you say in this discussion will remain anonymous. We will not identify anyone by name in our assessment report. The notes from the discussion will contain no information that would allow you to be linked to specific statements. Is it okay to record this conversation for the purpose of taking notes? Only [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] program staff will have access to the recording. [Wait for verbal response.]

Do you have any questions? [Answer any questions.]

Okay, let’s begin.”

Interviewer Question Set

Warm-Up Question
[This question is intended to start the conversation with something easy and comfortable. It is not part of the analysis]

1. What do you find most enjoyable about being involved in politics/being an activist/working in elections/being a leader in your community? [Please customize this question based on the role/occupation of the interviewee.]

Assessment Questions
The questions below include both closed- and open-ended questions. Some questions also include specific guidance for the interviewer on the information that is necessary to gather for the assessment; in some cases. In general, the questions that are numbered are for the interviewer to ask the interviewee, and the bulleted text underneath is guidance for the interviewer on the types of information to collect.
Social Media and Virtual Platform Use

1. How do you use social media or other online communication platforms? These may include social networks as well as messaging platforms or other interactive online services.
   - What platforms do you use (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, WeChat, etc.)?
   - Are there any specific platforms specific to [COUNTRY] or the region that you use?

2. Why do you use social media? For what purposes?
   - Do you ever use social media to talk about politics or elections?

Online Violence and Harassment

Definition: Online violence and harassment includes a broad range or abusive, harassing, degrading and violent language circulating on the internet, text messages across a range of intensities (from sexist slurs to direct threats of physical harm).

1. Can you describe a situation where you experienced online harassment or violence personally? [Share the above definition with the interviewee, if needed. Allow the interviewee to respond organically; follow up with questions below for more detail as necessary.]
   - Did you experience it in a public space (via tweets, public Facebook posts, etc.) or in a closed space (private messages on social media apps, WhatsApp, closed Facebook groups, etc.)?
   - On what platform did the incident initially take place (Facebook? Twitter?) Did it spread to different platforms? Which ones?
   - Who were the perpetrators?
   - Did you observe any coordination of the perpetrators or those sharing abuse?
   - Why do you think you were targeted? Do you think you were targeted due to your political participation or activism? Why or why not?
   - Was this the first time it happened? Has it happened more than once?
   - How did you respond? Did you report the activity to your organization (political party or CSO), to platforms, or to law enforcement? How did it make you feel (scared? angry? sad? embarrassed? indifferent?)
   - For about how long would you say the incident lasted (was it a few hours? Days? Weeks?) How long after the initial incident did you continue to receive harmful messages?
   - Did it migrate off of social media to other online communications platforms (private text messages, calls, WhatsApp, etc.)? Did it spread offline, i.e., were there any physical or real-world consequences?

2. Can you share more about what the impact of that online violence was on you? On your family? On your ability or willingness to participate in politics or civic activism?

3. Have you ever chosen not to participate in an event, speak out, or participate in public discourse in some way (i.e. publishing writing, appearing in media, etc.) because of abuse you have received, or expect to receive?

4. Have you heard about others experiencing online harassment or violence? If yes, who have you heard about? Can you give examples of what happened?
5. In the cases just mentioned, were there specific insults or threats that perpetrators used? Can you give examples? 
   • Are these insults/threats specific to your culture or part of your identity? What do they mean, and why are they hurtful?
   • Did these threats affect whether the targets chose to continue their work in politics or activism?

6. Do you think that all women experience online violence in the same way? How is online violence different for different groups of women? Do women from other marginalized groups (women with disabilities, young women, older women, women from minority religions or ethnicities, etc.) experience it differently? How?

Note to interviewer: You can ask about women from specific marginalized groups depending on country context. For example, in Guatemala, the facilitator could ask: do women from Indigenous communities experience online violence differently?

7. Can you tell me about a situation where you’ve seen men in politics experience online violence? Do you think men experience online violence differently than how women experience it? How?
   • Are the comments/words/phrases used differently?

Other Questions to Consider
   • Would you feel comfortable asking for help from the police? Who else would you ask for help to deal with a problem like this?
   • Do you use platforms’ reporting tools, if available, to report the online violence and attempt to mitigate it?
   • Do you know of any cases where a woman has brought a formal complaint to authorities about an act like this? (if yes, please get details). What happened, how did the authorities respond? Were the perpetrators punished?
   • If you experienced harassment or online violence like this as part of your work for a political party or civic group, how did your party or group react? Did they offer any support?
   • If you were to experience another incident of online aggression like this, how would you respond differently?
   • In your opinion, what needs to happen to end this problem? Have you heard of/are you involved in any initiatives to address this issue (please describe)? What has been effective? Are there some approaches that have been tried and are unsuccessful?
   • Did you find any effective support in dealing with this experience? If so, where? (e.g., groups of friends, political party/CSO, etc.)
   • What do you feel you need, personally, to be better equipped to deal with hostile online behavior?
Closing Question

[This question brings the conversation to a close without abruptly ending the discussion. Depending on the response, there may or may not be relevant information here for the analysis]

1. Do you have any other thoughts on this topic that weren’t covered here today? Anything you would like to add?

Interviewer’s Conclusion

Provide the interviewee with the list of resources in case they’d like to reach out for support. You can end the conversation with the following:

“Thank you for participating. This has been a very insightful discussion and we really appreciate your willingness to share your experiences with us. If there is anything about which you’d like to give feedback, you may reach out to me through [INSERT LOCAL STAFF CONTACT’S NAME HERE]. I would like to remind you that any comments included in this report will be anonymous.”
Guidance on Safely Interviewing Survivors of Violence and Trauma

Before Interview/Focus Group

- **Consult with local groups that focus on violence before data collection formally begins.** These groups will have the best information on:
  - **Locations where survivors feel safe** so that survivors feel like they have privacy and that they are safe in the area where you are doing the interview/focus group. Survivors may also want someone in the room with them or may want to be entirely alone for an interview. Others are welcome in the interview space, but only if the respondent actively consents.
  - **What questions to ask (or not ask)** as these groups will understand what types of questions are most sensitive. It’s important also to ask open-ended questions, as these allow participants to provide the information and detail they want to share and often yield richer answers. Yes/no questions can make participants feel pressured to reveal information they are not comfortable with sharing.
  - **What resources exist for participants** if they want to seek help after the session.
  - **What information and data are already available** through resources like reports from other CSOs, election observation reports, etc.
- **Identify a trauma-informed counselor** who will be present in interviews or focus groups with survivors of violence.

During Interview/Focus Group

- **Ensure there are clear informed consent practices.** Make clear what issues will arise during the interview/focus group, how the information will be used, and that participants do not have to answer questions if they do not want to. Check in and repeat this throughout the conversation.
- **Reinforce that participants should feel comfortable taking a break or leaving if they feel uncomfortable.** Tell participants that if they are uncomfortable with a certain topic or feel triggered by something, they are welcome to take a bathroom break, a tea break, step outside for fresh air, or generally excuse themselves from the conversation. Participants should know that they can stop or pause the interview at any time for any reason. Consent is meant to be continual rather than given one time.
- **Ensure participants know they only need to share what they are comfortable with.** Participants do not have to give specific details about anything that happened to them. They are free to leave out details, tell a story as if it happened to a friend or neighbor, or simply not tell us at all. We’re not an investigatory body, and they should not feel like they owe us their stories.
- **Be prepared if survivors become visibly upset.** Survivors may get visibly upset, and that is okay. Simply offer the respondent time to pause or stop the interview. This might be a
good time to offer water or refreshments and a tissue. For focus groups, a participant is welcome to leave if they feel uncomfortable, but the focus group will not necessarily stop at that point. Seeing someone get upset can be very difficult, and the researcher may feel the need to stop the interview, but we should avoid making that decision for the survivor. Instead, we should simply ask what they prefer to do and follow their lead. Some survivors may find interviews to be too much for them, while others find interviews to be an opportunity to be heard. It can be healing to share your story in a way, especially when you feel like someone is truly listening and believing you – a rare situation for some survivors.

After Interview/Focus Group

- **Provide a resource list for all participants in case they want to seek help or support after.** This list can include local women’s organizations, health centers, or information on how to seek justice or accountability, based on what is appropriate for the country and local context. Copies can be carried and then given to someone, explaining that while we cannot address every need ourselves, we do want to make sure those we speak with are connected to services they may need. Something the size of a business card is easy for survivors to carry, and it’s important to confirm the service providers’ contact details are accurate and actively working.

- **Ensure secure storage of data.** It is critical that personally identifiable information of participants remains confidential and safely stored so this information remains private. If data is not stored securely, it could put participants at risk.