

Keep your chats exactly that!



Keep your chats exactly that!

This campaign aims to empower young people to prevent them from becoming victims of violence or harassment when they use the internet and cell phones. Additionally, helping them use these tools as ways to advocate for change on issues important to them.

The Information Age has brought about an increase in the use of technologies. This development has assisted in a quick, easy and in some instances, cheaper ways to share and disseminate information. The development of Information and Communications technologies (ICTs) has assisted us to access and practice our rights, including right to access information, the right to self expression and right to privacy. However, young people are often confronted with violent encounters in these environments. Therefore violence becomes a hindrance in the realization of their freedom to self expression, information access and communication.

Within these virtual meeting spaces, there exists destructive or sexist intentions from people who are themselves regular users and or sexual predators. This is where images, video sharing and particularly language is used as violent tools to weaken, bully, lure and control other users. Virtual spaces are meant to offer some level of privacy and are supposed to potentially offer a level of control regarding regulation of interaction between people. However it is because of the very nature of these spaces that some you people, like girls often feel excluded at best, and are victims of violence at worst.

Girls and boys are confronted with offensive language use or get involved in a tug of coercive language and threats. While exploring developmental or educational and leisure spaces, they are sometimes lured or flashed with pornographic material and postings of images or videos. Initially in some cases, contact between girls and males started out as strangers. However, in many cases, this leads to physical contact. Leading to this contact, often takes place after the sharing of private and personal information, further putting girls in a vulnerable circumstances. Sometimes, this contact leads to human trafficking of girls which is an increasing problem in South African society.

There is an increase need for young people to access, use and own spaces such as the internet and cell phone technology for their own development. These tools offer huge potential for addressing development challenges. However, the prevailing gender disparities and power imbalances between males and females play out in these virtual environments, as well as in reality. Cell phones have been implicated in transactional sex, producing, sharing and distribution of pornography and human trafficking. However creating safe spaces for the youth to communicate and express their needs has become an important tool in the fight against such rising social problems.

This campaign, therefore serves to address violence experienced in internet and cellular phones by raising awareness and disseminating information and therefore promote using the same tools for positive social participation on the same issues.



(T) +27 11 429-0000 (F) +27 11 838-9871 PO Box 62577 Marshalltown, 2017 31 Quinn st Newtown Johannesburg
<http://www.womensnet.org.za> email: women@womensnet.org.za Taking a Byte out of Gender Injustice