

Technology-Facilitated Gender-based Violence: Developing a Shared Research Agenda

Summary

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) is a growing issue that undermines gender equality and disrupts the rights and development of women and girls worldwide. The TFGBV Shared Research Agenda outlines research priorities to address this global problem, identified through an inclusive and methodologically sound process that ensures diverse representation.

The agenda-setting process builds on a crowd sourcing methodology created by the Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative (CHNRI) that enables the participation of multiple stakeholders surpassing the 'expert' judgement of any one person. Three groups were established to govern and guide the co-creation of the Global TFGBV Shared Research Agenda —the Stewardship Group, the Advisory Group, and the Global Expert Group. Drawing on the support and expertise of passionate experts across these three structures, the Global TFGBV Shared Research Agenda was created through a 6-step iterative process, with many opportunities for feedback and debate.

A scoping review of the literature identified five key research domains, under which 481 possible priority research questions were generated via an online survey. After extensive consultation with the Advisory group, 75 questions, 15 questions for each of the five domains, were selected and widely shared through an online global ranking survey. The survey was available in English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, Bahasa and Hindi, with 350 respondents participating.

Top Two Research Questions in each Domain:

Domain 1: Nature, Prevalence, and Impact

- What is the current prevalence rate of TFGBV across different online platforms and among various demographic groups?
- What is the nature, prevalence, and impacts of TFGBV in specific settings?

Domain 2: Responses

- What policy and legal frameworks exist to address TFGBV, and how effective are they?
- How are private sector organisations, including tech developers, being held accountable for the technology they create and for TFGBV perpetrated on their platforms?

Domain 3: TFGBV Prevention

- What evidence-based interventions work to prevent different forms of TFGBV?
- Which prevention interventions have been most successful in shifting attitudes and behaviours of perpetrators of TFGBV, including those in the high-risk categories for perpetration?

Domain 4: Populations

- How does limited or lack of internet access affect marginalised groups' ability to seek justice for TFGBV?
- How can findings from certain populations be applied to broader understandings of TFGBV while respecting local realities?

Domain 5: Measures and Methodologies

- What are the best approaches for conducting ethical and safe research on TFGBV, including in humanitarian settings?
- What are the best approaches for analysing laws and policies on TFGBV?

Key Findings:

- 1. Consistency across priorities:** Overall, there was great consistency in the top ranked research priorities under each domain across geographic, demographic, and professional expertise of respondents.
- 2. Understanding TFGBV:** There is an urgent need for foundational research to understand the magnitude, nature, risk factors, and impacts of TFGBV, including perpetration.
- 3. Measurement and Methodology:** Standardized, reliable, and valid measurement tools are needed to capture TFGBV's complexity and assess intervention efficacy.
- 4. Responding to TFGBV:** Response strategies must be survivor-centered, with robust legal frameworks holding perpetrators and platforms accountable.
- 5. Prevention Strategies:** Effective prevention methods across different platforms and perpetrator groups are needed, with technological platforms prioritizing safety features.
- 6. Intersectionality:** An intersectional approach is crucial, acknowledging that TFGBV's risks, impacts, and consequences are not equitably distributed.

Our collaborative and inclusive methodology in setting research priorities aims to ignite a concerted effort among different actors to address TFGBV more effectively. We are aware the situation in the fast-moving world of technology shifts constantly and the agenda will need to be nimble and flexible to adapt to this. For instance, whilst the impact of AI does not feature in the top five questions of any domain, the emergence of AI tools that impact TFGBV has escalated since the development of this agenda and will need to be included in any consideration of research priorities in this area.

This global shared research agenda is offered in service of providing a strong foundation of evidence for constructive action. We call upon all stakeholders dedicated to fostering violence-free online environments to advocate for the implementation of this agenda. In doing so, we will advance our understanding of TFGBV and formulate effective and quality responses to support survivors and victims, nurturing violence free online and offline spaces for all women and children.

