

HER Internet

Safe for HER!

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It is Pride month!

June is the month that ushers in Pride celebrations all over the world. Pride in Uganda usually means a small gathering of dedicated LGBTQ folks fighting for their right to love and be seen getting into clashes with the police. The year 2021 also saw the Sexual Offenses Bill passed by the parliament of Uganda - coupled with the COVID19 pandemic, the journey ahead seems long and arduous.

However, this has only strengthened and fueled the communities' resolve to make this country better for the next generation of queers, in both big and small ways.

We present to you the first issue of our biannual newsletter that shares our work and the current affairs at HER Internet.

We extend our unreserved gratitude to allies, partners, friends and community members for supporting our work.

Research report launch

HER Internet hosted the launch of our report on a research study conducted all over Uganda to determine the experiences of lesbians, bisexual and queer (LBQ) womxn and Female sex workers (FSW) with violence in online spaces as part our contribution to build an evidence base to support collective advocacy efforts for the LGBTQ and sex work communities.

We are very happy to share with you the research report titled “The trends and impact of technology assisted violence among Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer Womxn and Female sex workers in Uganda.”

The increasingly rapid technological advances have created new possibilities for the criminal misuse of ICTs. It is therefore important to interrogate how far the harm goes, the avenues of access to justice for these violations and what LBQ womxn and FSW needs are in this regard. The report is available for downloading [here](#).



Dialogue on Surveillance and Security

On 11 May 2021, HER Internet hosted a dialogue on Surveillance and security to unpack what digital safety and security look like in this age of digital surveillance. The Internet excels at the job of quickly sharing things with others while on the other hand, keeping private information safe and secure online is a challenging task, doubly so for Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer womxn and female sex workers in particular.

This dialogue therefore created space for much needed discourse on what the womxn present understand surveillance to mean and what their different and various vulnerabilities are; in comparison to the security skills, tools and information available to them.





Consultative meeting with Facebook

HER Internet was part of a consultative meeting held by Pollicy on behalf of Facebook to understand how Facebook's policies can better serve their user community and how to manage violating content on the platform. Specific discussions around the violence faced by public figures on their platform were held with the intention of enabling Facebook's Bullying and Harassment policy, better serve their user community.

Facebook regularly reaches out to external stakeholders to seek their expertise, provide visibility into their policies as well as discuss questions and concerns about their products.

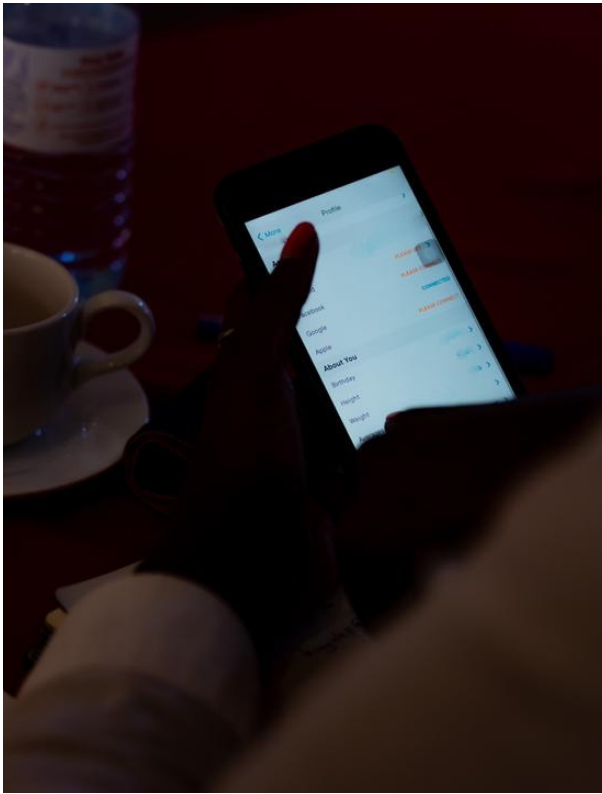
Accelerator Campaign

HER Internet is part of the accelerator campaign in partnership with Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) and Amnesty Denmark.

In light of the Sexual Offences Bill being passed by the parliament of Uganda, the campaign under #RepealSOBUg and #DeleteClause11 started off by the accelerators visiting various partners and allies in order to revisit commitments of allyship and strengthen existing partnerships with them and the LGBTQ community.

The month of May was also significant to kickstart the campaign to celebrate and honor the International day against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). All the organizations reached pledged to create safe spaces for LGBTQ persons in Uganda.





Mental health and the Internet

Many people with access to the Internet do so on a daily basis, and the Internet has become a well-integrated part of our lives. This has led to changes in how we live our lives, how we construct and maintain social relations and self-identities, seek information, and enjoy entertainment.

The Internet itself is not the main cause of poor mental health but the way we use it can negatively impact us through a number of ways such as: causing anxiety and depression; some negative impact on physical health including strained eyes, back pain or change in sleep patterns; low self-esteem and in extreme cases, Internet addiction disorder.

Taking care of our mental health is always important and we have all faced strange, unprecedented times with the COVID19 pandemic. With increased use of the internet - especially social media, there is often little escape from reality. It can feel impossible to “unplug” and take a break from the online world.

Check out some mental health tips [here](#).

Stakeholder's Dialogue on the Challenges of Youth HRDs

HER Internet was part of a panel discussion on the various challenges faced by Youth Human Rights Defenders in the current shrinking civic environment in Uganda.

This event was organized by Freedom House Uganda and was attended by several organizations working on human rights, the ambassador of the USA to Uganda and other key stakeholders in the human rights space.

We highlighted the challenges faced by queer womxn and sex workers in utilizing and accessing digital platforms with the ever increasing rates of online violence.



DECODING ONLINE VIOLENCE



HER
Internet

Handbook; Decoding Online Violence

Many womxn, let alone queer womxn and sex workers, have experienced some form of online harassment but we continue to disbelieve victims and trivialize their experiences.

Following a successful focus group discussion with LBQ womxn and sex workers, HER Internet presents a handbook that captures all the rich discussions under the topic 'Decoding Online Violence' available for downloading [here](#).

“
LOVE.
BECAUSE WHEN
YOU *LOVE*, YOU
ARE USING THE
GREATEST
POWER IN THE
UNIVERSE.
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