

### Vision

An equal and just internet for all womxn restoring their agency as their own agents of social change.

### Mission

Equipping (minority) womxn with digital literacy and cyber security information and skills for increased and safer online engagement, while contributing to the objectives of the feminist movement.

### Core values

Inclusivity & Fairness  
Innovation & Creativity  
Collaboration & Teamwork  
Transparency & Accountability

Good afternoon to you all,

I am honoured to be here today, a day before the International Women's Day 2024, to address a critical issue that affects not just structurally silenced communities but society as a whole; violence. Violence against women and the LGBTQ community globally and in Uganda continues to rise despite efforts and measures implemented by states, civil society and other stakeholders to address it. The UN statistics on 1 in 3 women experiencing some form of violence within their lifetime still stands to date, and that number goes up with LGBTQ individuals and others who are on the margins such as those living with disability.

This violence however, rarely takes into account online violence and how it is a reflection and extension of what occurs offline. Technology facilitated violence is on the rise as we shall see later today with the Ripples comic book being launched.

Women – especially women human rights and environmental defenders, activists, feminist groups, LGTBQI persons, and young women continue to face widespread discrimination and violence offline and online as well as unequal access to the internet and technology.

All of which are being fueled by cultural and social norms that reinforce gender stereotypes of women, and of men, significantly threatening participation of women in digital and public spaces resulting in tremendous, often irreversible harm on the mental health, wellbeing, and safety of women and girls.

In the context of COVID-19, scarcity of resources and the closing civic spaces for organizing, organizing that is often on the margins (including organizing led by queer communities) is increasingly taking place online. Digital spaces also create opportunities for breaking isolation, shifting popular narratives, and building movements. Thematic groups, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, influencers, web activists, and digital forums are flourishing on platforms that are increasingly transforming the face of feminist engagement.

By using technology to promote gender-responsive policies and practices, we can create a more inclusive and equitable society. This includes promoting the use of technology to improve access to education and economic opportunities for women and queer people enhancing their participation in decision-making and leadership positions, and creating safe spaces for them to share their experiences and ideas.

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 Nsasa, Kira municipality. Wakiso.

 HER Internet



Safe for her...

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We must also ensure that women and queer people are involved in developing technology and resources, and that it is used in ways that do not perpetuate gender-based discrimination and stereotypes but creates positive change and breaks down the barriers to one's empowerment. This requires a conscious effort to address the gender gap in the technology industry and to promote diversity and inclusivity in tech-related fields.

Everyone's role in the digital economy is essential for the growth of communities, while the cost of excluding women and queer people from the digital space has deep economic impact. However, gender inequality cannot and should not be addressed by the most affected only.

As I am deeply committed to women's empowerment and gender equality, I am saddened by how women and queer people are held back from their full potential, but at the same time deeply motivated to work to empower us in any and every way, in both professional and in personal settings. I hope that you all here today feel and act in the same way as it is up to all of us to bring about substantial and meaningful change, that not only needs to, but must happen.

To all the women and queer people here in the room, You are incredible! You are amazing! You are inspirational, and the community draws strength from you. After all, you, and we, can do anything and everything we set our minds to. I am thankful to the team at HER Internet that continues to show us how the internet and our online activities are deeply connected with the offline spaces we create and occupy. And to Martin for pointing this out in his presentation.

To all who were part of the discussion on developing this comic book, thank you for sharing your imagination, stories and experiences with us. I am proud to launch the Ripples comic book today during the Women's month, that sheds light on the interconnected challenges faced by womxn in navigating both online and offline spaces.

Wishing you all a very, Happy International Women's Day!

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