HER Internet's Biannual
NEWSLETTER

Hello from us,

The second half of 2025 unfolded during a period of heightened tension, rapid digital shifts, and growing uncertainty for many communities in Uganda. As the country moved closer to an electoral cycle, digital spaces became increasingly contested, marked by intensified surveillance, online intimidation, misinformation, and shrinking civic space. Throughout the months that followed, we focused on meeting communities where they are, strengthening practical digital safety skills, amplifying lived experiences of harm and resistance, and pushing for accountability in spaces where policy, power, and technology intersect.

It was within this broader context that our Executive Director, Sandra Kwikiriza, was recognised during the 16 Days of Activism by **Leading Ladies Africa** as one of **16 African womxn** championing the fight against Gender-based Violence. We hold this recognition as a reflection of the collective effort, courage, and solidarity that shape our work.

Through community trainings, policy dialogues, artistic and healing spaces, research engagement, and public conversations, we continued to center feminist values, survivor-led perspectives, and the knowledge held by those most affected by digital violence.

HIGHLIGHTS;

➤ **Digital Safety and Resilience Trainings for Structurally Silenced Communities in Uganda.**

➤ **Cohort 4 of Online Safety and Security program: Follow-Up Sessions.**

➤ **#Defend: Human Rights Are Universal Arts Festival 2025.**

➤ **16 Days; #UNiTetoEndDigital ViolenceAgainstWomena ndGirls Campaign**

➤ **Recognition During 16 Days of Activism 2025.**

Safe for her!

Digital Safety and Security Training with RELLA Womxn's Foundation.

As Uganda moved closer to a tense electoral period, reports of coordinated online threats targeting RELLA Womxn's Foundation became more frequent and in response HER Internet convened a Digital Safety meeting with RELLA Womxn's Foundation on 5th August 2025 to respond to the growing risks. With elections often heightening online harassment, surveillance, and coordinated attacks, the discussion focused on the specific digital security threats RELLA was facing and the broader patterns likely to intensify during the electoral season. The conversation emphasized practical, collective approaches to safety, rapid response, and community resilience.

Cohort 4 of Online Safety and Security program: Follow-Up Sessions.

HER Internet hosted 3 virtual follow-up sessions for LBQ womxn and non-binary persons based in Eastern, Western and West Nile regions, that is; Mbale, Mbarara and Arua respectively on Tuesday 19th August stemming from the physical basic Digital Safety and Security training workshops that took place in their respective regions earlier in April and June. The sessions intended to check-in on participants in applying the tools and skills that they acquired, address any challenges they may be facing, and explore areas that require additional support at individual, organizational and community levels to strengthen their digital safety, vigilance and resilience to counter Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence (TFGBV) related incidents targeting queer persons during Uganda's general elections season 2026.
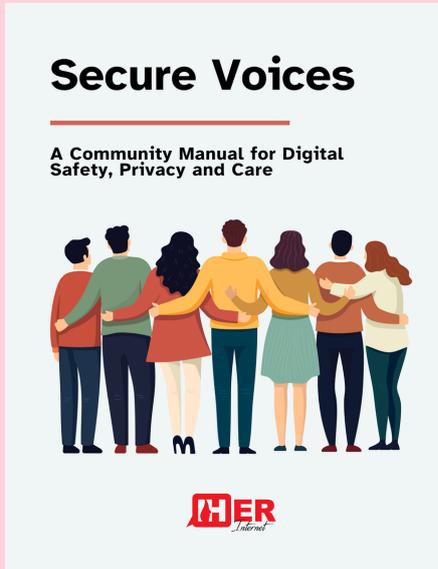
Digital Spaces should empower womxn and girls. not harm them. Technology- facilitated violence affects our safety, dignity and sense of self, and ending it demands collective care and real accountability.

Sandra Kwikiriza
Executive Director - HER Internet

Safe for her!

Digital Safety and Resilience Trainings for Structurally Silenced Communities in Uganda.

In the month of September 2025, HER Internet hosted a series of regional Digital Safety and Resilience trainings in Kasese, Masaka, Malaba, Gulu, and the Kampala metropolitan area, bringing together structurally silenced communities to reflect on strategies for staying safe online amid heightened surveillance and intimidation as Uganda moved closer to the electoral season. Each training also featured a dedicated Digital Security Desk, where participants received one-on-one, practical support tailored to their specific needs. From securing devices and strengthening passwords to reviewing privacy settings and addressing active threats, the desk created space for immediate, hands-on assistance grounded in participants' lived experiences.

To conclude the project, HER Internet officially launched **#SecureVoices**: A Community Manual for Digital Safety, Privacy, and Care during the closing webinar. Developed through a collective process with partners and community mobilizers, the manual offers practical guidance on navigating digital risks while fostering care and solidarity in online spaces. Read the manual here: _https://www.herinternet.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Secure-Voices-manual.pdf_

International Day of Older Persons 2025 #IDOP2025: Digital Equity for All Ages.

Under the global theme **"Older Persons Driving Local and Global Action: Our Aspirations, Our Well-Being, Our Rights"**, Kaka Proud Legends Initiative (KPLI) in partnership with HER Internet and (q)-reatives spearheaded an online campaign titled **"Digital Equity for All Ages"** in comemoration of the annual International Day of Older Persons #IDOP 2025 from Wednesday 24th September to Wednesday 1st October 2025. This campaign aimed to raise awareness on the exclusionary gaps and challenges faced by aging and elderly marginalized communities in Uganda when it comes to digital literacy and safety, as well as, underscored their role in shaping the digital future that we envision. Feel free to catch a glimpse of the campaign messages across all our social media platforms **#DigitalEquity4AllAges**.

Firewall and Chill: Digital Security for the (q)reative Class.

In a collaboration with HER Internet, (q)-reatives hosted the Firewall and Chill Digital Security for the (q)reative class on Saturday 27th September 2025. This virtual session, facilitated by Diana Karungi, the Programs Director at HER Internet, was particularly tailored for queer creatives to learn some game-changing digital security practices that would enable them to safeguard their art work and craft online. Sessions within covered included effective and efficient daily digital security practices, gig platform safety tips, secure digital payments as well as device and account protection.

Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA) Healing Festival: Digital Safety and Care Circle.

HER Internet facilitated Digital Safety and Care learning circles during the annual Feminist Healing Festival which was hosted and organized by Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA) on Friday 21st November 2025. During the conversations, we dived into practical knowledge and information concerning digital safety for feminist leaders and organizations in Uganda ahead of the 2026 general elections.

> For structurally silenced communities, the internet remains both a lifeline and a battleground, a place to connect, but also a space where fear, silencing, and violence take root.
>
> Diana Karungi –
> Programs Director - HER Internet

#Defend: Human Rights Are Universal Arts Festival 2025.

Under the theme **#Defend**, HER Internet took part in the Human Rights Are Universal festival #HRAUUg2025 (4th Edition) which was organized by East African Visual Artists (EAVA) in Kampala from Thursday 9th October to Sunday 12th October 2025. This space was curated for artists and creatives with all diverse forms of expression to celebrate art as a tool of resistance and resilience in advancing human rights and dignity. In addition to an on-site booth to showcase our work and resources, Diana Karungi, our Programs Director engaged in a panel discussion titled "Power Through Expression – Arts, Media, and Free Speech in Community Empowerment" which examined the intersection of advocacy, creativity and technology in advancing social justice causes.

Digital Security Sessions for Just Associates Power Up (JASS PU!) Learning and Sharing Pond.

In the partnership of Just Associates (JASS), Sandra Kwikiriza, the Executive Director at HER Internet facilitated Digital Security sessions for Power Up (JASS PU!) LBTQI+ partners to strengthen their safety and security online in the aftermath of work accomplished and concluded under the Power Up! Initiative from Tuesday 12th August to Wednesday 13th August 2025. These sessions were part of a series of online dialogues hosted between July to August that centered on critical topics of power, protection and digital security which will in turn support the participants' efforts towards continuous advocacy, solidarity and vigilant monitoring to promote and safeguard LBQTI rights, in addition to fostering continuous learning and collective strategizing to ensure that JASS PU! partners' interventions remain relevant and impactful.

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16 Days; #UNiTetoEndDigitalViolenceAgainstWomenandGirls Campaign

As part of the #16 Days, Sandra Kwikiriza, The Executive Director at HER Internet, joined an X Space on Monday, 1st December 2025, under the **#UNiTetoEndDigitalViolenceAgainstWomenand Girls** campaign, hosted by MTN Uganda. The discussion unpacked what it means for womxn to exist, organize, and express themselves online in environments shaped by surveillance and unequal power. The conversation highlighted the dual nature of digital spaces as sites of opportunity and risk, calling for shared responsibility from platforms, institutions, and communities.

16 Days of Activism 2025: Digital Safety Training for QuestPro-Women Foundation (QWF) Partners.

During the 16 Days of Activism 2025 observed between 25th November and 10th December, HER Internet in partnership with QuestPro-Women Foundation (QWF) conducted an online Basic Digital Safety training to strengthen the capacity of QWF's sub-grantee partners across Africa encompassing the global theme **"UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls"**. We also developed a Basic Digital Safety Starter Pack, a simple, user-friendly and practical guide that can be utilized by human rights defenders to fortify their respective digital safety journeys as they carry out their day-to-day work online as they navigate the current hostile environment in which civil society operates. To read the Basic- Digital Safety Starter Pack tool kit; *https://www.herinternet.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Basic-Digital-Safety-Starter-Pack-1-1.pd*f

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16 Days of Activism 2025 Webinar: Understanding Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV).

In a joint 16 Days of Activism campaign led by Akina Mama wa Afrika, HER Internet, Defenders Protection Initiative (DPI) and Pollicy themed **#SilenceIsNotSafetyUg,** we organized an insightful webinar dubbed Understanding Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV): Responsive Mechanisms on Monday 1st December 2025. Diana Karungi, the Programs Director at HER Internet shared a presentation titled Social Media Algorithms and Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV): How Algorithms Shape TFGBV Against Structurally Silenced Communities in Uganda which examined how social media algorithms contribute to spread and impact of TFGBV, in addition to recommendations that will ensure digital rights, safety, resilience and accountability especially for marginalized womxn and communities.

Digital Violence Against Womxn and Girls in Uganda: A Myth or Reality?

On Wednesday, 3rd December 2025, Sandra Kwikiriza, the Executive Director at HER Internet participated in a national webinar hosted by Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Alliance Uganda titled **"Digital Violence Against Women and Girls in Uganda: A Myth or Reality?"** The session brought together civil society actors, policymakers, and advocates to examine how online insults, threats, non-consensual image sharing, and coordinated harassment translate into real-world harm.

Young Womxn's Realities in the Fight Against Gender-Based Violence.

Mulungi Sanyu, the Communications Director at HER Internet joined an X Space held as part of the 16 Days of Activism on Friday, 5th December, reflecting on what digital safety looks like for Young Womxn navigating online spaces. Hosted in collaboration with ACTSO1 and AGYW Advocacy Forum, the conversation explored how everyday digital interactions shape AGYW's realities in the fight against gender-based violence. The space created room for honest reflection and reaffirmed the importance of centering AGYW voices in digital safety work.

The Tech People Want Online Summit

On Tuesday 8th July and Wednesday 9th July 2025, Diana Karungi, the Programs Director at HER Internet attended The Tech People Want Online Summit which was hosted by Open Knowledge Foundation (OKFN). This two-day event convened non-technical professionals including data practitioners, communicators, project managers, and advocates to rethink how technology supports their work using conversational sessions. For more information about the sessions, watch here: https://archive.org/details/@okfn/lists/1/the-tech-people-want-summit-2025.

Breaking the Chains: Addressing Economic Gender-Based Violence.

Mulungi Sanyu, the Communictions Director at HER Internet participated in a workshop titled **"Breaking the Chains: Addressing Economic Gender-Based Violence as a Sexual Reproductive Health and Human Rights (SRHR) issue for structurally silenced womxn in Uganda,"** between 23rd and 24th July 2025, hosted by Mend Initiative with support from Akina Mama wa Afrika. The workshop created an interactive space to explore the links between economic control, violence, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Womxn Speaking; Technology-Facilitated Gender-based Violence Against Womxn and Girls.

On Tuesday, 26th August 2025, Mulungi Sanyu, Communications Director at HER Internet, joined the Womxn Speaking panel hosted by CivicSpaceTV to discuss Technology-Facilitated Gender-based Violence against womxn and girls. The discussion explored how online abuse, harassment, and intimidation limit womxn's participation in civic and public life. Drawing from HER Internet's advocacy work, Mulungi emphasized the importance of naming online harm as real violence and advancing collective, survivor-centered responses. In case you missed out on the recording watch it via; *https://youtu.be/6Afv-zaYnlk?si=pYLqdai-VDW2oka-*

Community Call: Website Security for CSOs and Nonprofits.

Diana Karungi, the Progrmas Director and Mulungi Sanyu, the Communications Director at HER Internet, joined The Centre for Multilateral Affairs (CfMA) in a validation meeting to contribute to a report titled **"Beyond Basic Access: Mapping Solutions to the Emerging Digital Participation Gap"** on Friday 3rd October 2025 in Kampala. This meeting aimed to collectively review, discuss, and validate the findings and recommendations of the study report on the digital participation gap in Uganda as we explored the barriers and solutions for "barely online" users in Wakiso and Mukono districts to ensure their meaningful digital participation. To download, follow link; *https://thecfma.org/report/final-report-beyond-basic-access-mapping-solutions-to-the-emerging-digital-participation-gap/*

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Feminist Tech Exchange. (FTX)

From 6th to 10th October 2025, Sandra Kwikiriza, Executive Director at HER Internet, attended the Feminist Tech eXchange (FTX) convening organized by the APC Women's Rights Programme. The convening created intentional spaces for learning, reflection, and collaboration. It centered womxn's lived realities and grounded conversations about technology in local contexts and feminist politics. Through shared learning and collective practice, participants deepened their knowledge, strengthened networks, and built solidarity across movements working with and around technology.

Honoring Intergenerational Feminist Movements; 40 Years of Weaving Feminist Futures Gala.

HER Internet attended the 40 Years of Weaving Feminist Futures Gala Dinner hosted by Akina Mama wa Afrika on 25th October 2025. The celebration marked four decades of feminist organizing across the continent, honoring the histories, cultures, and relationships that continue to shape feminist movements today. It was a moment to reflect on the power of collective action and the importance of sustaining intergenerational feminist leadership.

> We need to strengthen the existing legal frameworks to have more stringent punishments for perpetrators instead of survivors and recognise online hate, harassment and privacy violations.
>
> *Tracy Nakayenga*
> HRAPF

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Global Dialogue on Gender-Based Violence in a Tech-Shaped World.

Sandra Kwikiriza, Executive Director at HER Internet, took part in **Connected Struggles: Rethinking Feminist Engagements with Gender-based Violence in a Tech-Shaped World,** a Global Dialogue convened by CREA from 11–13th November 2025. The dialogue brought together feminist activists and researchers, particularly from the Global South, to reflect on the growing overlap between tech-facilitated and offline gender-based violence. It created space for critical conversations on power, politics, and feminist responses to violence in an increasingly tech-shaped world, strengthening collective understanding and movement-building across contexts.

DREAM Uganda Edition; Digital Rights and Elections

As elections approached, Mulungi Sanyu represented HER Internet at the Digital Rights and Elections in Africa Monitor (DREAM Uganda Edition) on 20th November 2025, hosted by Paradigm Initiative and the Centre for Multilateral Affairs. The meeting convened regulators, platforms, media, and civil society to discuss disinformation, hate speech, platform transparency, and safeguarding civic space.

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4ᵗʰ Edition of Ntare Festival 2025: Strengthening Feminist and Decolonial Knowledge Production and Methodologies in the Study of Social Policy and Economies in Africa.

On Sunday 14ᵗʰ December 2025, we attended the 4ᵗʰ Edition of Ntare Festival 2025 which was hosted by by Simma Africa Creative Arts Foundation (SAF) and Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR). Themed Strengthening Feminist and Decolonial Knowledge Production and Methodologies in the Study of Social Policy and Economies in Africa, this one-day affair served as a bridge for artists, scholars and activists to celebrate culture, community, inclusion, diversity and legacy building on Africa's creative industry.

Recognition During 16 Days of Activism 2025

16 African Women Championing the Fight Against Gender-Based Violence

LEADING LADIES AFRICA

Sandra Kwikiriza

She is a Ugandan feminist and digital rights activist, best known as the founder and Executive Director of HER Internet, a feminist organization that protects female sex workers. Under her leadership, HER Internet offers digital security training, psychosocial support, and safe-space convenings that equip vulnerable women with the tools they need to protect themselves online.

During the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, our Executive Director, Sandra Kwikiriza, was recognised by Leading Ladies Africa as one of 16 African womxn championing the fight against gender-based violence.

We receive this recognition not as an individual achievement, but as a reflection of the communities, partners, and movements that continue to organise for safety and dignity in both digital and physical spaces.

You can read the full feature here: https://leadingladiesafrica.org/2025/12/10/16-african-women-championing-the-fight-against-gender-based-violence/

REACH US

📧 info@herinternet.org

💬 +256707057393

🌐 www.herinternet.org

👍 @herinternet

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