



# **FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE**

**BUILDING AND TESTING  
A FRAMEWORK FOR DEFINITIONS  
OF ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE  
AND OTHER TERMS**

**Women's Rights Online (WRO)** is a global network of gender justice and digital rights organizations, working through research and advocacy to bridge the gender gap in technology, data, and policymaking.

**TEDIC** is a Non-Governmental Organization founded in 2012, whose mission is the defense and promotion of human rights in the digital environment. Among its main areas of interest are freedom of expression, privacy, access to knowledge, and gender on the Internet.

**Fundación Karisma** is a civil society organization that seeks to respond to the threats and opportunities posed by "technology for development" to the exercise of human rights. Founded in 2003, Karisma is now positioned as one of the leading Latin American civil society organizations working to promote human rights in the digital world.

**Sula Batsú** is a social solidarity economy enterprise that was born with the objective of encouraging and strengthening local development through joint work with organizations, social enterprises, community networks, and social movements. The cooperative focuses on strengthening local development in the context of the digital society.

**Pollicy** is an African feminist collective of technologists, data scientists, creatives, and academics working at the intersection of data, design, and technology to create better life experiences by harnessing improved data.



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**WORLD WIDE WEB  
FOUNDATION**

## **FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE**

Building and testing a framework for definitions of Online Gender-Based Violence and other terms

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# BACKGROUND ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB FOUNDATION AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS ONLINE

The [World Wide Web Foundation](#), established in 2009 by Rosemary Leith and the inventor of the web, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, strives to foster an open, safe, trusted, and empowering web for everyone. A leading barrier in realising this vision is the prevalence and persistence of Online Gender-Based Violence. In partnership with [Women's Rights Online](#) (WRO), a global network of leading gender justice and digital rights organisations, they have used the proven model of the [Technology Policy Design Labs](#) (TPDL)<sup>1</sup>, to convene human-centred design approaches to better diagnose the scope of the problems and build multi-stakeholder solutions.

## INTRODUCTION

As we work across networks gathering information about the frequency and degree of online gender-based violence, there exist many studies and reports which describe similar forms of online gender-based violence (OGBV) and its impact, but the language and terms used to define acts and subsequent measurement of these harms are uncoordinated and often misaligned. There's a plethora of data, but lack of coordination when incorporating that data into solutions, policy design and implementation. As with the development of any definition, coalescing terminologies encompassing OGBV will limit the representation and experiences of some in favour of capturing a widespread experience of the whole. Current attempts are driven out of and heavily favour the Global North, although there are multiple initiatives in the Global South making important efforts against online gender-based violence. To fill this significant gap and center the work of those closest to the problem, this document presents a framework for researchers, data analysts, and policymakers to locally develop and adapt terms that can best represent the local experience and understanding around OGBV (and other terms to be shared below)<sup>2</sup>. Such a framework was built based on an initial mapping of definitions and manifestations of OGBV that then identified common traits among them. We expect that this framework will offer a starting point to policy-makers linked to data collection processes on building new or enriching existing survey efforts designed to measure universal harms.

An initial data collection stage was conducted to understand the phenomenon of OGBV and the plethora of definitions employed to describe and identify its associated manifestations. The WRO working group<sup>3</sup> collected and mapped existing language to analyse how different stakeholders define OGBV and how those definitions are utilised in follow-up policy and/or project design and implementation. We also

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- 1 The TPDL is an interdisciplinary initiative aiming to foster collaboration among governments, companies, and civil society to address complex tech-policy challenges. Using human-centred design and design thinking, TPDL's workshops seek to develop innovative policy frameworks and products that prioritise inclusivity and effectiveness, shaping the future of technology for the benefit of all.
  - 2 This framework was initially built from insight terms gather in a literature review process that will be further described below. You can find a Zotero repository centralising all mapped documents [here](#).
  - 3 WRO member organisations contributing as part of the Ontology Working Group include: Hope Mozambique, TEDIC, Sula Batsú, Karisma, Pen to Paper, Pollicy, Wougnnet, MFWA and KICTANET.

utilised household-style data collection instruments focused on OGBV for additional definitions and language.

The research outcomes were the end-goal of a unique methodology that proposes a framework for developing definitions and manifestations of OGBV to create a flexible yet standardized method for identifying a variety of inputs from different cultural and geographic contexts. This methodology also included a mapping exercise to identify diverse knowledge frameworks and sources and contextualize definitions and language related to OGBV. Specifically, the following questions were used as a starting point for data collection:

- ◆ What has been produced about online gender-based violence in the past three years? What types of typologies currently exist, and how they interact?
- ◆ What are the existing policies and regulations on gender-based violence, and do they incorporate OGBV provisions?
- ◆ Is there available work regarding household surveys to identify/measure OGBV for the past years?
  - ▶ How do they define OGBV?
  - ▶ How many questions do they have, and to what stakeholder does it pertain?
  - ▶ Were these household surveys ever conducted on a national scale?

The data collection stage resulted in the identification and analysis of more than 90 documents,<sup>4</sup> including reports, blog posts and policy- documents that provide a truly global overview of the current state of discourse on and engagement with OGBV. The global mapping exercise focused on work and research from regions including North/West/Southern and Central Africa, Europe, North America and Latin America. It includes work from academia, national and international civil society and international organisations, specifically the European Union, the Organisation of Inter-American States (OAS) and the United Nations. Though the wide breadth of research means that we lose some of the narrow focus of a regional, country, or subnational assessment, we consider it to be representative of the different regions on which the WRO members currently develop its advocacy and are nuanced enough to allow for some reflections and conclusions regarding manifestations and definitions of OGBV, and how to close the divide between north and south understandings of the phenomenon.

At the outset, we recognized that the plethora of terminology and language used to identify the overarching trend that we are terming OGBV—including online abuse, digital abuse, cyber-violence against women, technology-facilitated gender-based violence, technology-facilitated violence against women, cyber violence against women and girls and techno-discrimination, to name only a few—might also point to a similar diversity of approaches, documented impacts, methodologies and contexts surrounding the manifestations of and response to OGBV.

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4 A detailed bibliographic database of resources is available [here](#).

## Mapped Global Terminologies

<p><b>Online Gender Based Violence (OGBV)</b></p> <p>Acts of gender- based violence that are committed, instigated or aggravated, in whole or in part, through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), such as cell phones, the Internet, social media platforms and e-mail</p>	<p><b>Online Violence Against Women (OVAV)</b></p> <p>Any act of gender-based violence against women that is committed, assisted or aggravated in part or fully by the use of ICT [Information and Communication Technologies] because she is a women or which [affects] women disproportionately</p>
<p><b>Online abuse</b></p> <p>These acts are often an extension of existing gender-based violence, such as domestic violence, stalking and sexual harassment, or target the victim on the basis of her gender or sexuality</p>	<p><b>Digital abuse</b></p> <p>Any form of abuse that has occurred on the Internet, through a telephone, computer, laptop, tablet or any other means of electronic communication, which aims to intimidate, harass and harm another person</p>
<p><b>Cyber-violence against women</b></p> <p>Act of gender-based violence perpetrated directly or indirectly through information and communication technologies that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, whether occurring in public or private life</p>	<p><b>OGBV against women and girls</b></p> <p>Any act of gender- based violence directed against a women because she is a women and/or which affects women disproportionately, facilitated either partially or entirely by information and communication technologies or heightened by them, such as cellphones and smarthphones, the Internet, social media platforms or email</p>
<p><b>ICT-enabled harassment and violence against women</b></p> <p>ICT enabled violence that blurs the boundaries between digital and physical space. Gender- based attacks that use digital ICTs are designed to silence women’s voices and presence in online and offline spaces</p>	<p><b>Technology’s direct harm to women and girls</b></p> <p>Any and all forms of online GBV, and can extend to physical harm and offline violence when assisted by the use of technology</p>
<p><b>Internet violence in the context of violence against women in politics</b></p> <p>General term for any communication activity with cyber- technology, which can be considered harmful to both the targeted individual and the consumers of digital technology and participants in online discourse</p>	<p><b>Online Violence Against Women Journalists</b></p> <p>Often brutal, prolific online harassment and abuse, including targeted attacks that frequently involve threats of physical and/or sexual violence; digital privacy and security breaches that can expose identifying information and exacerbate offline safety threats facing women journalists and their sources; and coordinated disinformation campaigns leveraging misogyny and other forms of hate speech</p>
<p><b>Technology-facilitated violence and abuse</b></p> <p>Umbrella term used to describe the use of digital technologies to perpetrate interpersonal harassment, abuse and violence</p>	<p><b>Technology- facilitated gender-based violence</b></p> <p>Encompassing term for the wider forms of this violence in relation to gender, as it includes non-internet-based violence such as stalking via GPS[...] However, there are many subsets of TFGVB, such as OGBV, which occur exclusively through internet-connected devices and online spaces, or image-based sexual abuse, which involves the use of sexual images to abuse people.</p>
<p><b>Techno- discrimination</b></p> <p>Gendered inequalities emerge through platforms technological operations and infrastructures, built into the way they function. This can give rise to multiple forms of discrimination faced by workers when platforms are actually used. These discriminations are hugely detrimental, often leading to inequalities in access to work, adequate safety measures and customer discrimination</p>	<p><b>Online or technology-facilitated gender-based violence</b></p> <p>Form of gender injustice and discrimination that takes place in online spaces</p>

<p><b>Violence against women online (VAWO)</b></p> <p>An action facilitated by one or more people that harms others based on their sexual or gender identity or by enforcing harmful gender norms, which is carried out by using the internet or mobile technology</p>	<p><b>Virtual sexual violence</b></p> <p>Refers to interactions that occur through telecommunications, computer media, broadcasting and social networks in which an adult comes into contact with minors, adolescents or young women in order to maintain some type of sexual contact</p>
<p><b>Cyber- violence</b></p> <p>Refers to the use of internet technologies to harass, monitor, seek revenge, and control women. It includes activities such as sharing explicit sexual content without consent, making sexual proposals, and engaging in other acts that harm a woman’s physical and emotional well-being. The document also highlights the need for interventions in education, culture, health, and justice sectors to address cyber violence and ensure a comprehensive response to violence against women.</p>	

Table created by the sub-group highlighting the different collected terminologies

From the different terminologies and concepts that were mapped, we identified and analysed the shared commonalities in language and definitions, including understanding how definitions identify the source of violence. An interesting duality emerged in those definitions that fail to identify the source (perpetrator data) of OGBV, and those that identify the roles and responsibilities of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as the vehicle of violence. Other approaches use language that has designated specific technology as the source of violence, such as mobile phones, cell phones, the internet, social media platforms, emails, computers, laptops, and tablets.

Another delineation amongst definitions stems from the assignation of the target of violence. While some focus specifically on women and the violence they experienced online or mediated through technology, others focus more broadly on women and girls, “individuals and persons based on their gender,” and people from LGBTQIA+ communities. The concept of *techno-discrimination* emerges as a term that could be considered unique in that it encompasses obstacles impacting women and LGBTQI+ platform economy workers since the term focuses on the gendered inequalities that emerge on digital labour platforms (i.e., Uber and PedidosYa). Lastly, another identified trait the different terminologies offer is that some of them also pay attention to the effects of OGBV on the political, economic, and social environments of survivors of OGBV.

The work of preventing and responding to OGBV is an essential component in our collective efforts to combat structural misogyny. Just like the physical manifestations of structural misogyny that come in many forms, digital violence manifests in a variety of mutating and multifaceted ways. The categories and topics outlined in the research were determined to better capture the complex similarities and differences described above, expressed through terminology on OGBV. The data collection stage also paid attention to identifying different manifestations such as cyberbullying, doxing, cyber stalking, hacking, impersonation, non-authorized dissemination of images, extortion, recruitment via the Internet for human trafficking purposes, sexual exploitation through ICTs, unauthorised recording, distribution, and use of digital content for coercion, among others.

One of the main observations also reflects a key challenge in our research: the diversity of global policy, implementation, and knowledge frameworks is reflected in the diversity of terminology, not only the definitions of OGBV but also the classification and definitions of its many manifestations. The resulting challenge is measuring the phenomena worldwide, allowing for the flexibility to capture the nuance and complexity inherent in a holistic understanding of OGBV.

A compilation of the aforementioned categories and terminology is available [here](#).

## IMPORTANCE OF CONCEPTS, DEFINITIONS AND MANIFESTATIONS

Different countries are thinking about ways to address OGBV. Civil society organisations (CSO) globally have been at the forefront of awareness raising and visibility when it comes to the gendered impact of digital violence, especially for those women active in public and political life. Their work to combat OGBV has seen the achievement of a number of shared and global goals, including: (I) increased awareness of many ways OGBV manifests, both in method employed and impact felt, (II) initiated public discussions around the structural misogyny that leads to violence, and (III) leveraged collective action to compel state authorities to take action against OGBV<sup>5</sup>.

We identified several initiatives led by authorities and private actors, such as social media companies. Most of these address violence superficially and without the provision of care to those targeted with OGBV. Some of the noted initiatives compounded the impact of OGBV in requiring women to prove the harm caused by the OGBV. Few initiatives provide for justice for targets of OGBV, implement the collection of statistical information, or address the structural causes of violence.

A collective and representative methodology for building and identifying definitions will allow for more accurate indicators of the magnitude and complexity of OGBV. It could also prove a key resource for more representative policy processes and paths for greater collaboration and exchange to combat OGBV worldwide.

Such replication of violence across countries is not an unfounded concern. Around the world, honour protection rules (defamation, contempt and slander) are used to prosecute online speech. In an extreme example, in Tunisia, women who have denounced public officials who omit their duties have faced imprisonment of between three months to a year, including a filmmaker who denounced the harassment she had suffered by the head of the police.

Moreover, with the new wave of regulations addressing digital violence, we have seen that they can be used for the same purpose. In Mexico, a law was passed to address violence against female politicians. However, it has been used to silence dissident voices. For example, in one case, a trial was initiated against a journalist for saying that a representative was “terrified” of having “cultured and informed people.” In another, actions were initiated against journalists and media outlets for reporting that the daughter of a congresswoman who worked in television was nominated to the Congress.

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5 One example is the integration of OGBV prevention and attention as an strategic area of work in the Costa Rica Gender, Science and Technology National Policy <https://www.micitt.go.cr/servicios/ciencia-y-genero>



Another **close example** in South America is in Colombia. A bill was formulated to confront political violence against women. Although it has an urgent and necessary purpose, it contains ambiguous definitions that could prevent criticising women's work in public positions. What is more, it could even lead to censoring humour or art.

Another case in Paraguay has a **similar tone**. The bill project "To prevent, punish and eradicate universal cyberbullying in Paraguay" has an ambitious goal to eradicate online violence. However, the legislative proposal lacks a clear definition of "digital violence". It does not detail the various types of violence that can occur through technology. Although in the motivational document, the legislator lists several types of violence, the bill project only addresses this issue in a generic way, which makes its application difficult. The ambiguity and lack of legal precision also makes possible contradictory and subjective interpretations of what constitutes violence, allowing discretionality in opening legal cases. The absence of clear definitions of violence and its different types adds an additional layer of uncertainty to the law. This is particularly important to reflect in the Paraguayan context since there is also **a situation** where the current law against all forms of violence towards women is being weaponised by certain public officials and their relatives who argue they are suffering online violence through digital means and invoke the cited bill to silence journalists and activists denouncing nepotism and corruption.

Thus, there is an urgent need to craft definitions and manifestations of OGBV that avoid broad approaches to legislation and policy-making. This to avoid censoring the same voices these initiatives seek to protect.

## Common Definitions and Manifestations Roundtables

### *Synthesis of discussions*

TEDIC, Fundación Karisma and Sulá Batsú co-organized two roundtables to tackle the objectives for the Common Ontology & Household Survey sub-group with the help of World Wide Web Foundation and Social Finance. The goal was to facilitate a conversation about the gaps and complexities observed in the definitions and manifestations of OGBV and to develop a framework for governments, academia, CSOs, and other relevant stakeholders to better understand and collaborate to combat OGBV. The roundtables offered a methodology for understanding the breadth and severity of OGBV globally, and to provide policy- and decision-makers a starting point to develop definitions of OGBV more representative of their local contexts. The roundtables were also a starting point to advocate for the framework to be used by policymakers involved in data gathering across different public institutions and as a starting point to tune- down existing data collection instruments that focus on GBV but failed to accommodate OGBV as part of their subject of attention. This particularly interests our Women Rights Online (WRO) network since more disaggregated data on OGBV is needed worldwide.

To facilitate participants from diverse backgrounds and nationalities, the roundtables were held in English and Spanish on April 29th and May 2nd, 2024, with a majority of participants representing Latin American countries. Analysis of the region provided depth to the conversation, and ensured prioritisation of global majority perspectives.

The two virtual roundtables were divided into the following themes:

- ◆ **Discover & Define:** Insights gained from the data collected during the research phase to discuss the key challenges of determining a single OGBV ontology. The focus of this session was to engage in a conversation about potential methods for addressing these challenges.
- ◆ **Co-Design & Develop:** Collectively develop a framework to identify and build definitions, and ideate ways to use them to facilitate standardised data collation. Also addressed were questions as to how the framework might be deployed in household survey questions, and guide policymakers in building their own definitions for effective legislation and policy-making.

In the first roundtable, participants were provided an overview of the pedagogy behind definitions and how definitions impact work on OGBV globally. We reflected on how regulations that employ broad definitions of what constitutes OGBV end up causing numerous problems in certain jurisdictions, particularly in Colombia, Paraguay and México where these regulations often result in (un)intended censorship of the communities they aim to protect, highlighting, from an empirical and contextual point of view, why more nuanced definitions of OGBV are necessary.

From such general reflection, we shared the main findings from the data collection stage of research, highlighting common patterns and differences in what is understood as OGBV across the globe. The outputs from this first session informed the second roundtable.

The second and final roundtable presented a working draft framework (discussed below in detail) for collective feedback and testing. The framework aims to establish a set of “bare minimums” that must be accounted for by policymakers and other stakeholders in designing initiatives (legislative, policy-making, advocacy, and others) to define and delimit OGBV. Participants then set out a road map for

moving forward from crafting definitions to using these definitions as tools for the more representative and inclusive gathering of OGBV data.

The insights gathered during the final roundtable shaped the production of this final synthesis document and the framework, which will be shared with all participants for adoption and dissemination as its primary output.

Below a summary table of the main inputs collected during the two roundtables.

### **Definition challenges**

The significant lack of nuanced, agreed-upon definitions for OGBV and its various manifestations across different countries and regions was highlighted. The challenge of definitions poses a rather complex obstacle in comprehensively understanding and addressing the issue. One key point of the discussion is the conceptual shift from OGBV to the broader term “Technology- Facilitated Gender-Based Violence” (TFGBV). While TFGBV aims to capture violence enabled by technology devices beyond just the “online” space, there are concerns that this terminological shift could overshadow or displace the prior focused work explicitly done on OGBV as a distinct phenomenon.

Another important question was raised about the perspective from which OGBV should be defined – whether from the viewpoint of survivors themselves or an academic/research standpoint. It is worth noting that existing definitions often originate from an academic standpoint that tries to include survivors’ of OGBV experiences.

### **Multiple Sample Definitions**

Several sample definitions from different organisations were provided to capture the nuances of OGBV/TFGBV as violence against women and girls facilitated by ICTs. These definitions highlight the intentional or consequential nature of OGBV, causing various harms such as physical, sexual, psychological, and economic damages. Some definitions emphasise that OGBV should encompass all forms of violence against women, girls, and adolescents, with technology being used as a means to perpetrate gender-based violence. It should be noted that the dynamics of the legal, policy, and normative contexts influence the formulation of these definitions. The definitional elements vary depending on the purpose—whether for legal, policy-aimed, or norm-setting—each carrying differential implications. For instance, legal definitions enable coercive claims and policies enabling preventive actions.

Likewise, the lack of connection between the method of OGBV and the extent to which existing definitions are anchored in structural gender inequality and manifestations of gender stereotypes is crucial. For instance, specific OGBV definitions against women human rights defenders within the context of environmental, land, and territorial rights spheres are needed.

Overall, the diverse sample definitions and the accompanying discussions underscore the complexities and nuances of establishing a comprehensive, universally accepted definition of OGBV that can effectively guide efforts to combat this phenomenon globally. More importantly, they highlight the need to push for fit-for-purpose processes to build definitions (and from different stakeholders) rather than advocate for template definitions built-in and reflecting only one part of the world.

## **Data Collection Challenges**

The main key issues in standardising OGBV data collection globally through a framework and household survey instrument include:

- ◆ Ensuring participant safety in the case of a data breach
- ◆ Inclusive data collection on the diversity of gender identities
- ◆ Cost and length barriers<sup>6</sup> impacting household-style survey access
- ◆ Respondents of the surveys (i.e., targets of OGBV) do not identify their experiences as violence
- ◆ Inconsistencies in knowledge frameworks around gender
- ◆ Including youth perspectives
- ◆ Complexities with the term “gender” in certain contexts
- ◆ The complex and highly individualised role of online platforms, content moderation algorithms, and other ICT engagement that impacts OGBV
- ◆ The challenge of regulating access to online data while reducing risks.
- ◆ The complexity of identifying perpetrators underscores the need for an interdisciplinary, multi-stakeholder approach.

## **Other challenges to implement data collection on OGBV**

- ◆ **Exploring other tools for data collection:** Exploring complementary data sources like hotlines and engaging diverse stakeholders (government and civil society) is vital for a comprehensive anti-OGBV approach that allows for data collection in nuanced ways.
- ◆ **Ensuring open data from national agencies:** The importance of open data advocacy is highlighted, with concerns that national agencies not generating open data would force civil society to rely on manipulated result sheets instead of raw data. For instance, the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI) in Mexico is cited as a good open data practice.
- ◆ **Training interviewers to avoid biases:** To minimize the potential of interviewer biases influencing respondents’ answers during data collection, comprehensive training for interviewers is emphasised, especially given the sensitive and personal nature of the topic and questions
- ◆ **Challenges of children/adolescents data collection:** Data collection involving children/adolescents is, rightly so, subject to strict regulations regarding consent, and by the nature of the guardian’s participation, data can be skewed. Special methodologies like focus groups in schools are suggested due to

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6 By length, a participant refers to the problem of lengthy survey documents that end up resulting in an enormous amount of time required for full participant engagement, and the problem of allocating too much time for a survey response.

consent complexities. Conducting interviews in the presence of the family could lead to underreporting. The “Best interests of the child” principle is highlighted, with some countries ratifying international conventions granting children/adolescents independent agency in cases of violence/abuse without necessarily requiring parental authorization.

- ◆ **Robust anonymisation to prevent re-victimisation and reconcile open data needs with anonymisation:** Robust anonymisation processes are needed to prevent re-victimisation while balancing the need for open data, as existing household-style surveys may only provide anonymised final results.
- ◆ **Lack of violence focus in certain countries’ household surveys:** The lack of a gendered perspective in existing household survey frameworks is problematic in that it only disaggregates the sex/gender of victims and perpetrators without further gender analysis of results.
- ◆ **Input from Indigenous communities is needed:** Indigenous communities’ perspectives on identifying violence across mediums, including digital spaces, are largely invisible, as their experiences are rarely documented or utilised as source data.
- ◆ **Regulators need to address OGBV:** Regulators have increasing responsibilities in addressing OGBV, requiring better coordination and communication among initiatives while adopting a sensitive approach to avoid exposing survivors to further risks.

## THE FRAMEWORK

We developed a framework for global utilisation to fill the gap in existing resources regarding the nuance and diversity of impact and manifestations and to improve data-collection initiatives to better capture both.

It is important to point out that numerous definitions and associated manifestations emerged from the preliminary data collection described above. It is evident that, for the past seven years, terminologies such as OGBV have left a mark in the research field. Different research documents and policy-briefs available for consultation in the [Zotero repository](#) offered above point to the relevance of the Association for Progressive Communication (APC) since such documents using this term point to the APC as the source of this concept.

However, more recently, and at least for mapped documents from the past year, the term Technology-Facilitated- Violence and Abuse (TFV) is an umbrella term used to describe the use of digital technologies to perpetrate interpersonal harassment, abuse and violence. Specific derivations of it, such as Technology-Facilitated-Gender Violence (TFGBV), aim to include the gender dimension and connect it to the more encompassing term of technology and, in comparison, OGBV. Below is a visualisation that offers the prevalence of certain terms versus others based on the [airtable document](#) that centralises all the mapped terminologies.

The below framework constitutes an effort from the WRO members to operationalize the already explained traits of how different stakeholders identify and characterize OGBV/TFGBV instead of pushing for a specific term.

Thus, the framework is not intended to be prescriptive but rather to guide stakeholders in developing more representative and impactful initiatives and policies to combat OGBV/TFGBV across the globe.

However, for the rest of this report, the dual term OGBV/TFGBV will be used, as they are the terms that currently encompass and characterize the phenomenon more broadly, allowing for nuance analysis.

Ciberviolencia  
 Cyber- violence against women  
 Cyber- violence against women & girls/OGBV  
 Cyber- violence  
 Cyber Violence Against Women  
 Digital sexual violence  
 Digital Violence  
 Violencia Digital u Online  
 Violencia digital  
 Digital abuse  
 Violencia de género digital  
 Technology- facilitated violence against women  
 Techno- discrimination  
 Technology- Facilitated- Violence and Abuse (TFV)  
 Technology- facilitated violence abuse  
 ICT- enabled harassment and violence against women  
 Internet violence in the context of violence against women in politics  
 Technology's direct harm to women and girls  
 OGBV against women and girls  
 Online Violence Against Women (OVAW)

**Technology- facilitated gender-based violence**

# OGBV

Violencia Sexual Virtual  
 Online violence against women journalists  
 Online or technology-facilitated gender-based violence  
 Violencia de género en línea  
 Violencia de Género en línea  
 Online violence against women politicians  
 Violence against women online (VAWO)  
 Online abuse/gender- based violence  
 Online Violence against Women

## Framework: guidelines for designing representative definitions

The following aspects could constitute the baseline of these essential prompts and thoughts to craft and identify definitions and manifestations.

- ◆ Always start with the question of what is the purpose of your definition.
  - ▶ Such a question gives an initial idea of how long and detailed a definition should be. For instance, it is not the same to craft a definition for a specific ministerial internal policy vis-a-vis a bill project.
- ◆ OGBV/TFGBV violence is inseparable from offline violence, and thus, we should pay attention to always highlighting that connection, especially in Global South contexts.
  - ▶ More attention should be given to identifying structural inequalities: OGBV/TFGBV does not exist in a vacuum. ; Definitions that reflect the offline and online continuum could help raise awareness of this connection.
- ◆ It is always important to clearly identify the technology used to exert the violence (i.e., ICTs or others). More importantly, it is also important to mention who is affected by such violence is crucial.
  - ▶ While no single definition has a uniform approach, in general, they delimit in some way the vehicle in which the violence occurs (they name the technology). They also outline the subjects of the violence.
  - ▶ This last point is more complicated since different jurisdictions might be more favourable to include certain groups versus others
  - ▶ From the WRO, we definitely aim for intersectionality, which we consider is the best practice whenever creating through definitions.
- ◆ Think nuancedly about the material consequences of OGBV/TFGBV.
  - ▶ Attention to issues of mental and emotional health is particularly needed, as well as a better naming of inflicted rights. Definitions naming social, economic and human rights infringement were mapped, but little attention to health issues is available.



## Framework: manifestations of OGBV/TFGBV

The list of OGBV/TFGBV manifestations is quite extensive, so the Framework outlines the most common shared traits identified during the research process to allow for the nuance that inevitably arises in each case of OGBV/TFGBV:

- ◆ **Use of technology as a means of perpetration:** Involves the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to carry out actions that seek to control, intimidate or harm survivors and could constitute a continuum from existing offline violence and structural discrimination.
- ◆ **Gender intentionality:** Manifestations are explicitly directed towards women, girls and those with non-normative gender identities to maintain or reinforce patriarchal and discriminatory power structures.
- ◆ **Impact on the lives of targeted individuals:** These actions have manifold negative consequences that can affect targets' emotional, psychological, social, economic and physical well-being.
- ◆ **Coercion and control:** The use of coercion and control over targets, limiting their autonomy and ability to make free decisions.
- ◆ **Reproduction of gender stereotypes and roles:** Gender stereotypes and traditional roles are reinforced, perpetuating inequality and gender-based discrimination.
- ◆ **Threats and harassment:** Presence of threats, harassment, intimidation or defamation of victims.
- ◆ **Symbolic and psychological violence:** This may involve forms of violence that seek to humiliate, discredit or control the target of OGBV.
- ◆ **Violation of privacy and security:** Often involves breaches of victims' privacy and security, such as non-consensual disclosure of personal information or tampering with electronic devices, and leading to the affectation of different rights, i.e., freedom of expression through self-censoring
- ◆ **Reproduction of asymmetrical power relations:** Reflecting and reproducing the unbalanced allocation of resources and influence, that creates a culture of impunity and reinforces and/or exacerbates structural inequality.

## What about Perpetrators?<sup>7</sup>

It is important to recognise that OGBV/TFGBV is a complex issue that affects millions of people around the world, especially women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ communities. However, to combat this phenomenon effectively, we need better data and a broader and more detailed approach to understanding perpetrators' diverse profiles, motivations, and online behaviour to develop more comprehensive definitions and approaches to OGBV/TFGBV. One of the strands of this project focused on answering key questions about perpetrators of online/technology-based violence.

During our work, we meticulously collected and analysed more than **50 documents**. The documentation encouraged conversations about gaps related to better data on perpetrators. Among many gaps, it is evident that there is a **lack of research on perpetrators of OGBV/TFGBV and standardised measurement methods**. In general, difficulties in accessing consolidated data on perpetrators pose a challenge, hence the need for more targeted sampling strategies. The lack of proper investigative methodologies hinders our ability to fully identify and understand these perpetrators. This directly affects our ability to develop standardised definitions and measurement tools that allow us to compare and better understand the tactics, behavioural patterns, and political dimensions of OGBV/TFGBV in different contexts.

Thus, attention to perpetrators is also important whenever stakeholders reflect on the definitions and manifestations of OGBV/TFGBV and how to generate data effectively using various data collection instruments. Generating more data on this matter will help close the knowledge gap on mitigating these types of violence.

## Connecting definitions and manifestations with data collection instruments

There is a particular interest from the WRO in advocating for the framework as a starting point that ensures more nuanced data collection instruments<sup>8</sup> on OGBV/TFGBV globally. As mentioned above, defining the reach of OGBV/TFGBV based on local, political, legal, political and cultural understandings of what this means is an important starting point. Such a starting point should then guide what data should be collected for subsequent evidence-based policy-making to fight this problem locally, regionally and globally.

The definitions and manifestation framework exposed above has identified key elements that should guide policymakers—related to data collection and assistance to women and other vulnerable communities on topics such as health, security and access to justice—not only to build definitions but also to enrich existing data collection instruments that already focus on gender-based violence or in general to services targeted to different groups. Different questions can be crafted based on the bare minimums we recommend in the framework, but they should be part of the creative process that the framework can facilitate. Thus, we offer a table to help policy-makers understand how to move from the definition and manifestation crafting to a tentative data collection structure.

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7 For a more detailed investigation of perpetrators visit: <https://www.tedic.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Perpetrators-of-gender-based-violence-online-1.pdf>

8 While household surveys are one of the well known data collection instruments for statistical representativeness, it is also important to **point out** that respondents to this type of surveys are usually males, which influences the data and the extent to which women and girls perspectives and voices are included. Thus, other type of data collection instruments must be reflected by policy-makers related to data collection.

Definition framework prompt	Potential inclusion into data collection instrument
<b>Subject of violence</b>	Identifying who is affected by OGBV/TFGBV is crucial for understanding the severity of the phenomenon. Thus, when starting a data collection process that focuses specifically on this type of violence, they should start by identifying the gender, age and sexual orientation of who is answering the question <sup>9</sup> . As already explained in the framework, we understand this is particularly difficult in repressive contexts where revealing this type of information can jeopardise personal safety. The level of detail selection for proper identification has to be made on a case-by-case basis.
<b>Type of technology used</b>	It is important to delimit the vehicle of the violence. Rather than solely focusing on digital technologies that depend on the Internet, more attention to technology in general can be crafted to open the possibility of more answers from the interviewee. Based on the type of data collection instrument, closed-ended questions with specific options naming types of technologies or open-ended questions may be considered. The second type of questions can provide more options not initially considered by the institutions that designed the survey.
<b>Continuum of violence (Offline to online)</b>	The continuum from online to offline or offline to online should be further characterised. Questions that can connect the depth of this continuum and how survivors identify this should be reflected and included in different data collection instruments.  The questions can include information about: Enumeration of lived OGBV/TFGBV situations, Amount of OGBV/TFGBV and GBV situations on a certain timeframe, Possible motivations of perpetrators, Possible identity of perpetrators if known and Actions taken after violence occurred and more.
<b>Material damages</b>	It is very important that data collection instruments can allow survivors to express how this violence has affected their lives. Questions that allow answers that depict this damage from different topics should identify mental and emotional health costs and stress, as well as social, economic and human rights infringement damages, letting interviewees pick at least 3 effects. Connected to this, it would be interesting to expand the identification of the damages and ask questions that help determine if assistance on behalf of different public institutions was activated and the degree of their effectiveness.

On the other hand, and connecting with the urgent necessity of disaggregated information of who the perpetrators are, data collection instruments that focus on OGBV/TFGBV should also craft questions that can at least determine the level of proximity of the perpetrator in relation to the survivor, to characterize what is the level of closeness between perpetrator and survivors, and if the patterns are similar to traditional gender-based violence perpetrators.

We want to provide an example of a project that might serve as inspiration. In México, the INEGI (National Institute of Statistics and Geography) has developed a Household Survey about Cyberbullying (and Cyberviolence). To begin addressing the theme and then continue to improve the data collection tool, among other methodological aspects, the Module on Cyberbullying (MOCIBA) is being conducted as an experimental module to the National Survey on Availability and Use of Information Technologies in Households (ENDUTIH) since 2015<sup>10</sup>. You can explore its methodology and findings [here in English](#) and [here in Spanish](#).

9 It is crucial to pay attention to data protection and ensure that all publish information is anonymized and cannot lead to identification of who has participated in the data collection process

10 De Estadística Y Geografía, I. N. (n.d.). Module on Cyberbullying (MOCIBA) 2015. <https://www.inegi.org.mx/programas/mociba/2015/>

The example of MOCIBA in Mexico aligns well with several of the recommendations and aspects discussed in the proposed framework for OGBV/TFGBV data collection. Thus, they offer a practical example of how some of our recommendations can come into practice. Here are some important practices from it that are relevant to the current research:

1. Inclusion of youth perspectives: MOCIBA considers the population aged 12 and older, addressing the challenge of including data from minors.
2. Identification of the subject of violence: The survey collects data based on gender and age groups, although it could be expanded to include sexual orientation as suggested in the framework.
3. Type of technology used: MOCIBA considers Internet and mobile phone users, aligning with the recommendation to delimit the vehicle of violence.
4. Continuum of violence: By collecting data on the frequency of harassment, MOCIBA contributes to characterizing the depth of the continuum of violence.
5. Identity of the perpetrator: The survey includes information about the harasser's identity, which helps determine the level of proximity between the perpetrator and the victim.
6. Actions taken after violence: MOCIBA collects data on victims' actions, which can help evaluate the effectiveness of institutional assistance.
7. Awareness of available resources: By asking if victims are aware of available resources, MOCIBA indirectly addresses the issue of institutional assistance.
8. Experimental approach and continuous improvement: MOCIBA has been conducted as an experimental module since 2015, suggesting a commitment to continuous improvement of data collection instruments.
9. Availability of data at federal and state levels: This allows for more detailed and localized analysis, which can inform more specific policies. The data is open and accessible via their website.

These MOCIBA practices demonstrate an approach that addresses several of the key aspects mentioned in the proposed framework, offering a concrete example of how to implement some of the recommendations in a national context. To read more about their conceptual design and implementation, read [here](#) (Spanish)<sup>11</sup>.

Lastly, considering the challenges identified in this study to understand the OGBV/TFGBV in a nuanced way, we recommend that the quantitative approach be complemented with qualitative analysis.

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11 The scheme provided on page 35 summarizes their proposal.

## NEXT STEPS

As a largely intellectual process, the reflections in this document offer a path for policymakers and advocates to use and adapt the definitions and manifestation framework in their local contexts. The ultimate goal is to facilitate policymakers' nuanced understanding of OGBV/TFGBV for more effective initiatives to combat it and reduce the well-documented negative impact that narrow approaches have on the rights of the communities they are designed to benefit.

As already outlined above, this document and its main innovation, the framework, do not push for a specific term since they come from the understanding that the definition and selection of a term should be collectively crafted in the context in which it is going to be used and by the actors who will be affected by such selection.

Thus, the framework is expected to become a starting point that helps different stakeholders craft these definitions for different purposes, including data collection, which is a specific point of interest from the WRO, as we already mentioned. It is important to highlight the importance of a definition as the starting point of any statistical data collection instrument that aims to generate data on OGBV/TFGBV at different scales. We hope that by testing such a framework in statistical offices, ministries of women, and both public and private helplines that address gender-based violence, more attention and documentation to the issue of OGBV/TFGBV will follow, allowing for a better understanding of the magnitude of such phenomenon at the local, regional and global level.

