PERPETRATORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ONLINE

ROADMAP FOR INVESTIGATIONS

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Women's Rights Online (WRO) is a research and advocacy network that aims to drive women's empowerment through the web. This network is an initiative of the Web Foundation and currently comprises women's rights and digital rights groups across 14 developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, working 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.

WORLD WIDE WEB FOUNDATION

PERPETRATORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ONLINE
Roadmap for investigations
JULY 2024

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BACKGROUND NOTES

The World Wide Web Foundation, established in 2009 by Rosemary Leith and inventor of the web, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, strives to foster an open, safe, trusted, and empowering web for everyone. A leading barrier in realizing 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 organizations, they have used the proven model of the Technology Policy Design Labs (TPDL)[1], to convene human centered design approaches to better diagnose the scope of the problems and build multi-stakeholder solutions.

The Perpetrator research team[2] developed a research methodology to identify and collect existing data from different actors[3] from across the globe. The first phase marked the initial stage of an ongoing effort to better understand the current state of research on OGBV perpetrators by collecting and revising 50+ relevant documents from different regions of the world[4]. From the data collection process, we subsequently moved to a series of TPDL workshops, each dedicated to **developing a research roadmap**[5] to identify research gaps and generate knowledge on the perpetrators of OGBV[6]. You can find all the systematised information of the TPDL discussions here. These materials collectively fed the development of this final document.

We acknowledge that women,men, and all genders experience OGBV, yet the majority of targets are women, girls and LGBTQIA+ communities, and it is this demographic that is the focus of our study. Moreover, we have identified a critical gap in existing research and discourse surrounding OGBV: while there is a wealth of information collected from the perspective of survivors, there is little attention given to identifying perpetrators, their motivations, and how to mitigate their impact. By comprehensively examining the dynamics and motivations of perpetrators and the enabling forces that drive perpetrator

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1   It specifically focused on: Civil society organizations, especially those addressing GBV, domestic violence, digital rights, security and safety, judiciary, and law enforcement; International and regional organizations (e.g., UNESCO, CEDAW); International CSOs (e.g., APC); Tech companies (ISPs and social media companies); Academia; and Governmental data and publications (e.g., gender equality bodies, Ministry of Justice, Prosecution, etc.).

2   Through an actionable research roadmap we want to address knowledge gaps in understanding perpetrators of OGBV. This roadmap will synthesise existing research, identify key areas for further investigation and recommend research methodologies. We will appoint a qualified researcher or group of researchers to lead this effort, ensuring its effectiveness and relevance in guiding future research and intervention strategies.

3   We acknowledge that is difficult to have widely accepted definition in a subject that still has much to explore; however, for the purpose of this work, we initiated the data exploration phase of this work by adopting a broad definition that defines perpetrators of OGBV as individuals, groups and other entities, including cyber-mobs, who engage in harmful behaviors driven by various motives and utilise technology to foster a hostile digital environment especifically for women, girls, and gender minorities, either directly or by magnifying and/or resourcing online violence and abuse. However, the nature of the term and the affected individuals evolved as both the data collection and TPDL workshops were finalised.

4   For futher details, visit the report at the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI by its Spanish acronym) website.

5   Safety by design, according to the Australian Government SafetyByDesign Commissioner, prioritizes user safety and rights in online product and service development. This involves three key principles: Service provider responsibility, User empowerment and autonomy, and Transparency and accountability.

6   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 prioritize inclusivity and effectiveness, shaping the future of technology for the benefit of all.

data, we are offering a set of targeted approaches to combat OGBV and create safer online spaces for all. These aims were driven by the pursuit of the following objectives:

◆ Develop a comprehensive methodology that integrates innovative approaches to conduct in-depth research on the experiences, methods, motivations, patterns, and modus operandi of perpetrators of OGBV.

◆ Synthesise and critically analyse existing research methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, about perpetrators of OGBV.

◆ Identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and areas for improvement in current approaches, to inform the development of more effective research strategies.

◆ Compile and review available information on the behaviours, identities, and methods employed by perpetrators of OGBV.

◆ Develop tangible next steps and actionable recommendations to address the existing knowledge gap surrounding perpetrators of OGBV.

◆ Understand how the lack of platform accountability and platforms' infrastructure (automated) perpetuate OGBV and contribute to the impunity of perpetrators and OGBV.

◆ Create a practical guide or toolkit for researchers and activists interested in further exploring the multifaceted dimensions of OGBV perpetration. This resource should offer practical insights, methodological guidance, and ethical considerations for researching perpetrators while highlighting the importance of survivor-centred approaches and ethical research practices.

◆ Foster interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration among academia, practitioners, tech companies, governments, civil society organisations, and advocates working in the field of OGBV research.

◆ Facilitate knowledge exchange, shared learning, and collaborative problem-solving mechanisms to advance understanding and address the complexities of perpetrator behaviour within diverse socio-cultural contexts.

From data collection to an honest conversation on OGBV Perpetrators

The Perpetrator Research Sub-group aimed to gain a more nuanced understanding of the current state of research on OGBV perpetrators. While we acknowledge that these findings may be limited in including experiences and perspectives from all regions of the globe, we collaboratively engaged with stakeholders from West Africa, North America, Central America, East Africa, Europe, South America, and Southern Africa. As such, we consider these findings as sufficiently representative and showcasing pressing challenges to consider in advancing more thorough research on various interconnected aspects of OGBV, and a particular focus on perpetrators.

The research process consisted of two stages. In the **first phase**, it focused on data collection and collation, WRO examined available data to identify perpetrators of OGBV (e.g. a stranger, a former intimate partner, a colleague, etc.). The data also revealed that there is currently no comprehensive information for capturing the experience and interrogating the behaviours of those who commit acts of violence and harm. After identifying some gaps, we designed the questions and issues we wanted to address in the TPDL format and moved on to the **second phase**.

The review of existing literature on perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence and subsequent discussions during the TPDLs allowed us to identify key gaps, trends and findings in the current research and practice landscape, which are summarised in the table below. Finally, moving into the Research Roadmap 2024-2025 phase, WRO presented a research roadmap working draft at the last TPDL workshops[7] to gather feedback and define next steps towards the tune- down and implementation of the research roadmap.

Phase 1 & 2 Findings (Combined)
Lack of gender-based violence research methodologies hinders comprehension of perpetrators and impacts the development of standardised definitions and measurement tools, crucial for comparing and understanding various tactics, behaviour patterns and political dimensions of OGBV across different contexts.
Gender, age and political beliefs of perpetrators are important aspects for understanding patterns and trends related to online harassment.
There are challenges in the judiciary's identification of perpetrators, which affects the State's capacity to offer reparation mechanisms in the context of OGBV. As a result, there are difficulties in trials and prosecutions of OGBV cases, especially in certain regions. Criminal investigation is further aggravated by the fact that OGBV data - that are relevant for the investigation - are kept by the platforms.
Survivors face challenges in reporting perpetrators to both platforms and state authorities and having reports downplayed or ignored.
Existing information reveals that sexual and gender-based violence may be more commonly perpetrated by individuals of one gender than the other.
Lack of consideration of regional and cultural variations in online harassment experiences.
Lack of data on perpetrators in the context of minors and cyberbullying, as well as challenges in researching child perpetrators due to parental consent and involvement of schools for data gathering.
Need for more quantitative data on perpetrator demographics and the nature of abuse they engage in.
Insights into perpetrators' motives, media consumption, and online habits to ascertain these factors can contribute to a cycle of exposure and perpetration of harmful behavior or if it can reinforce and normalise harmful attitudes and behaviors towards OGBV, exacerbating the problem.

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7   You can find the initial table with all the documentation and preliminary data collection here Perpetrator Research_Excel 3.xlsx. You can also find a Zotero link with all the sources here.

The need for non-English datasets to train models for detecting online behaviour across tech platforms. More transparency and access to the existing data-sets is required to understand the LLM logic and conduct.

Understanding perpetrators as human beings with offline experiences, motivations, and psychometric details. It involves grasping the collective dynamics of assaults and the psychological traits of cyber mobs. Furthermore, it necessitates understanding the varied experiences and motivations of trolls, taking into account factors such as age-related influences

Different types of perpetrators and harms highlight the need to investigate the diverse profiles of OGBV perpetrators, including state actors, freelancers, and political opponents - and their coordinated efforts – to develop nuanced interventions and accountability measures.

Overlap between targets of OGBV and perpetrators; meaning that survivors of OGBV may, in turn, engage in similar behaviour towards others, potentially perpetuating the cycle of abuse. This also highlights gaps in understanding psychological effects.

Platform data and targets reported data to assess the effectiveness of appeal mechanisms. Platform data holds immense significance in comprehending OGBV dynamics, serving as a cornerstone for understanding the efficacy of interventions and the evolving landscape of online safety.

Information reveals instances where OGBV perpetrators include freelancers, hired consultants, and political entities and their supporters. Exploring the role of payment systems could be vital for understanding the dynamics of OGBV more comprehensively

Ethical considerations regarding associated risks and triggering aspects of OGBV also involve privacy, consent, and responsible data usage. Integrating ethical guidelines into research is crucial for its integrity and impact.

Understanding how OGBV is committed within different social groups, including the conservative LGBTQIA+ community.

Need for a broader perspective on perpetrators beyond individual actions.

The evolving nature of OGBV and a plethora of perpetrators necessitate continuous monitoring and learning to stay abreast of emerging trends and challenges.

Difficulties in capturing data on certain demographics, such as the 45+ age group, highlight the digital divide and issues related to online engagement for specific populations, requiring more targeted sampling strategies.

Understanding automated and synthetic content in amplifying OGBV harms.

Additionally, one aspect that contributors and TPDL participants have highlighted is the lack of accountability of tech companies in effectively addressing the combat of OGBV perpetration. The literature points to the specific need for tech companies to be transparent and proactive in preventing and tackling OGBV, including effective sanctions for perpetrators. Meanwhile, from the TPDLs discussions, some participants argued that tech companies[8] themselves can also become perpetrators, especially when proper explanations, due process and appeal mechanisms are lacking or are very difficult to access, significantly impacting targets of OGBV.

Although there has been engagement with platforms to address the issue, without much impact, it is necessary to continue working collaboratively with them to increase transparency and proactive measures to prevent and address online violence against women and girls. Additionally, a collective advocacy framework is urgently needed to counter the lack of response from the platforms.

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8   A group of organisations from the Global South that was particularly interested in addressing perpetrator research was formed and within the WRO network and as part of the Better Data team. These are: TEDIC(Paraguay), Pollicy(Kenya/Uganda), Pen2Paper(Eastern Europe),

As with the previous point, the project identified gaps and challenges that urgently call for action. We wanted to better understand both the behaviours and drivers that lead perpetrators to commit acts of violence online, and we ended the project by identifying so many multiple perspectives for future research in the field that will lead to filling the gaps in the scourge. By recognising the necessity of bridging the gaps and challenges in understanding OGBV perpetrators, we urgently call for a multi-faceted approach involving research, policy, tech and advocacy efforts.

We view this research project as a crucial step towards addressing these challenges and implementing targeted interventions by setting a baseline study. By presenting our outcomes and engaging the necessary stakeholders, we can work towards preventing and effectively combating OGBV from new and creative perspectives.

SUGGESTED THEMATIC PRIORITIES FOR 2024-2025

Moving forward, the Web Foundation and the WRO network will maintain their focus on achieving tangible outcomes and enhancing the involvement of key stakeholders to address critical challenges related to OGBV Perpetrators Research. To advance this objective, we will formulate baseline studies with actionable recommendations aimed at tackling OGBV perpetration. On this part, we are also making some consideration regarding the importance of naming stakeholders who we believe could be interested in conducting the research and fill the gap as a next step in this process. By doing this, we aim to enhance the impact and relevance of the research by encouraging other actors outside of the network to get involved in this critical topic.

The project reinforced the importance of researching OGBV perpetrators. This is crucial for identifying patterns and motivations behind OGBV, and informing the development of targeted interventions, policies, tech-accountability mechanisms, educational programs, restorative justice measures, and legal reforms. By analysing the data, it will be possible to better understand the underlying causes and dynamics of OGBV, enabling tailored interventions and policies to effectively address them. These interventions may include targeted educational programmes aimed at promoting digital literacy and fostering an equality culture online. Additionally, by implementing tech-accountability mechanisms, such as moderation tools and reporting systems, we can create safer online spaces and hold perpetrators of OGBV accountable for their actions. Furthermore, insights derived from this analysis can inform the design and implementation of restorative justice measures, allowing for the rehabilitation of both survivors and perpetrators while also addressing the systemic issues that contribute to OGBV. Finally, this knowledge can guide legal reforms aimed at closing gaps in legislation and ensuring that the legal system effectively protects targets of OGBV and punishes perpetrators. By thoroughly unpacking the data and insights, we can develop a comprehensive approach to combating OGBV that encompasses prevention, intervention, accountability, and justice.

By understanding the factors driving such OGBV perpetration behaviour, we understand that researchers can contribute to creating better support systems for survivors of OGBV, including tailored resources and counselling services. Active multidisciplinary involvement and collaboration ensures comprehensive solutions; thus, it is necessary to engage diverse stakeholders, including government, tech industry, civil society organisations, academia and schools, to develop a research roadmap to shed light on perpetrators of OGBV.

Undoubtedly, a deeper understanding of the dynamics of OGBV perpetration would facilitate the development of accurate interventions and holistic solutions, amplifying the effectiveness of our efforts to combat this scourge. In that sense, the suggested baseline studies are intended to guide stakeholders and contributors in addressing identified gaps effectively and uncovering global variations and commonalities to foster culturally sensitive strategies. Although we acknowledge the existence of numerous research gaps in this field, as revealed throughout the various stages of our project, we have chosen to highlight three key areas that stood out prominently in our discussions, which are the following:

1. Minors as Perpetrators of OGBV

It is well known that children and adolescents increasingly engage with the online landscape through online gaming communities, messaging apps, social media, and video streaming platforms, presenting opportunities and risks. The absence of disaggregated data on minors as perpetrators is a critical gap that has been highlighted throughout all stages of the project. Furthermore, insufficient data on this matter can exacerbate the exposure of young individuals to OGBV, particularly girls and LGBTQIA+ youth.

Firstly, the lack of this data affects the understanding of how cyberbullying affects different age quintiles. The alarming rise of cyberbullying among youth poses severe risks to their mental health and well-being. For instance, one of the studies gathered from Latin America, specifically Mexico[9], have revealed a troubling trend wherein a significant percentage of students demonstrate indifference or even endorse cyberbullying, indicating a concerning normalisation of violence and a lack of awareness regarding its impact. This lack of knowledge of the type of perpetrators complicates the development of effective interventions tailored to specific age groups, hindering efforts to mitigate cyberbullying's harmful effects as a type of OGBV.

Moreover, the interplay between online and offline behaviours, particularly among younger generations, underscores the urgent need for research that transcends digital boundaries. Young boys and men are not immune to online vulnerabilities, as they can be radicalised, extorted, or exposed to harmful ideologies online. Recently reported international incidents such as adolescents utilising AI deep fake technology to generate explicit content of their peers and the exchange of these hypersexualised content over the internet, further accentuate the seriousness of the situation. Namely, incidents such as the Almadrejo case in Spain, the case of a school of Rio de Janeiro, another similar case in New Jersey and Costa Rica underscore the importance of comprehending the dynamics, motivations, behaviours and impact of perpetrators among minors and their potential for exploitation and abuse in both online and offline environments.

Addressing this gap is important not only for understanding the types of perpetrators involved but also for elucidating the mechanisms that could drive behavioural changes. Data is interconnected, and addressing this issue can complement information in other baselines studies. Namely, this knowledge is crucial for informing the development of educational programs and interventions aimed at promoting digital literacy, fostering healthy online behaviours, and safeguarding minors against cyberbullying and online exploitation. By delving into the complexities of perpetrator behaviour and its offline ramifications, and considering age diversities, researchers can pave the way for more targeted and impactful strategies to combat OGBV and ensure the well-being of young individuals in the digital age.

Possible pathways:

◆ Investigate the connection between online and offline attitudes of minors towards OGBV in schools. Bridging the gap in data on perpetrators among minors and understanding the link between online and offline behaviours is essential for promoting digital safety among youth and developing evidence-based strategies to combat different types of OGBV. This could involve employing snowball sampling techniques and social network analysis to identify influential individuals within educational communities.

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9   It is worth noting that the final workshops were conducted hybridly in May 2024 and at the sides of CSW68. More information here https://www.tedic.org/csw682024/

- Collecting data on the socio-demographic characteristics of youth perpetrators across various age groups is essential for understanding the underlying dynamics fueling OGBV, such as cyberbullying behaviours, fake content creation and non-consensual dissemination of images and videos. It is crucial to explore the influence of online gaming, virtual environments and AI platforms in perpetrating such behaviours. Partnering with diverse stakeholders beyond schools and social media companies is particularly important in addressing OGBV among this demographic.

- Foster the inclusion of children and young people's experiences when addressing possible solutions and the consideration of safeguards in the digital realm, by acknowledging the significant impact of OGBV on minors through empirical data.

- To conduct research within school settings to promote the implementation of targeted interventions and educational programs aiming to enhance positive online behaviours and prevent OGBV perpetration.

- Investigate how to implement educational campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the impact of online violence among minors, including potential victims and perpetrators. These campaigns should prioritise promoting digital literacy and responsible online behaviour and providing support services for victims and child perpetrators alike. Collaboration with schools, parents, and relevant stakeholders is essential to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of these interventions. Additionally, establishing partnerships with online platforms and app developers is imperative for addressing OGBV effectively. Engaging with these entities can involve implementing measures such as creating escalation channels for reporting abusive content, restricting app downloads for minors, and enhancing content moderation systems. While labeling of generated AI content may not provide significant assistance in combating OGBV, proactive measures that tackle structural issues such as those mentioned can contribute to mitigating its harmful effects.

2. Factors, drivers and types of perpetrators of OGBV

The identification and understanding of OGBV perpetrators pose significant challenges, as evidenced by the multiple gaps identified during the project stages. While some characteristics of typical perpetrators are known, there are still numerous gaps hindering the identification and comprehension of various types of perpetrators, as well as the factors and motivations driving their actions.

Moreover, given the challenges in identifying and understanding behavioural motivations, there is a need to expand the scope of what constitutes a perpetrator. Existing data also fails to adequately distinguish between mission-driven perpetrators and those who engage without strong convictions. Namely, these gaps extend to understanding complex scenarios where motivations may not be readily apparent, such as in the case of paid trolls, AI-driven bots, and other ideologically motivated individuals.

There is also a lack of data linking other underlying factors such as lack of employment, economic status, and social conditions that contribute to the weaponization of vulnerabilities that fuel online abuse with attack patterns. Additionally, other types of poorly explored OGBV perpetrators are those operating in the context of telework, where higher-ranking individuals and peers are identified as perpetrators. State actors and police officials are also implicated as perpetrators such as reported cases in Brazil and all over the world, indicating the urgency of exploring this topic further. Furthermore, there is evidence suggesting that some victims of OGBV may become perpetrators themselves, which depicts the psychological effects of OGBV on survivors that needs further exploration, and more importantly, what support mechanisms in the aftermath of an attack should be offered both short- term and long-term to survivors.

According to the findings, perpetrators come from diverse backgrounds, with some exhibiting layers of hate fueled by a lack of psychological support and social acceptance to certain groups. There is therefore the challenge of thinking about how to explore the issue, what methodological strategies to deploy, how we can adopt actionable solutions to address the perpetration of online gender-based violence in the different settings and forms in which it can present itself, who to partner with to address it comprehensively, and from whom we can obtain relevant information on the issues we want to explore.

Additionally, it should be considered that some scenarios may pose their challenges and particularities such as dealing with power asymmetry, or other colloquially accepted ground rules that may be at play given the characteristics of the target victim as is the case of women in politics, human-rights advocates, or journalism. As is the case with women in politics, perpetrators of OGBV often include political opponents and colleagues highlighting the need to address OGBV in sectoral and highly political and ideological contexts. The emergence of women as perpetrators, albeit in smaller percentages compared to male perpetrators, underscores another complexity of OGBV dynamics.

Cultural expectations of masculinity and norms of digital society were also identified as OGBV perpetrators' factors. Coordinated groups, including men's rights activists and extremist groups, are increasingly engaging in OGBV against women and other gender-diverse communities, particularly in regions or cultures that are more conservative or tend to reinforce historical dynamics of gender-based violence. These highlighted issues call for urgent actions in researching and understanding regional and cultural differences in OGBV experiences. Especially because these regional differences may require different approaches to solutions.

Although not widely explored, we identified that data on perpetrators of OGBV exists but may be limited to known types and patterns. Addressing the gaps and challenges requires a multidisciplinary effort to complement and diversify the already familiar studies on the type of perpetrators and their motivations to provide more effective safeguards for the vast existing particularities in OGBV perpetration. Understanding perpetrator behaviours and motives is vital in designing responses that prevent OGBV as early as possible.

Possible pathways:

- The evolving nature of OGBV necessitates expanding the scope of what constitutes a perpetrator, recognising the significance of platform data and the continuous need for monitoring and learning.

- Conduct large-scale surveys and data collection efforts to gather quantitative data on perpetrator demographics, including age, gender, socio-economic status, and geographic location. This data should be accompanied by comprehensive details regarding the abusive behaviours involved, including the types of harassment, their frequency, and the severity of the incidents. It is crucial to underscore the role of intersecting forms of oppression, such as racism, classism, and heteronormativity, in shaping the experiences and actions of perpetrators of OGBV. Given that much of the necessary data for understanding OGBV may already exist, either in some form or to some extent within platform databases, it is crucial to seek collaboration with these platforms. Exploring avenues for accessing such data, or discussing how platforms can share anonymised data without violating confidentiality policies, is essential for gaining comprehensive insights into OGBV trends and dynamics.

- Investigate the diverse profiles of OGBV perpetrators, including state actors, freelancers, and political opponents, to develop nuanced interventions and accountability measures.

- Work with researchers who are studying the prevalence of hate speech and violence online, and engage with partners in the gaming industry, dating apps, app developers and others to obtain a major understanding of the experience of perpetrators of online hate and abuse.

- Employ qualitative research methods such as interviews, focus groups, and content analysis of online platforms to gain insights into perpetrators' motives. By exploring perpetrators' media consumption habits, online behaviours, and exposure to extremist ideologies, researchers could uncover underlying motivations and factors contributing to their actions and inform targeted interventions aimed at countering radicalisation and preventing OGBV.

- Promote collaboration with international partners, leveraging translation tools, and employing machine learning algorithms trained on diverse linguistic datasets to expand the scope of analysis beyond English-language platforms, and enhance the detection of OGBV behaviours across tech platforms in different non-English speakers' regions.

- Integrate qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews and ethnographic research, to collect data on perpetrators' offline experiences, backgrounds, motivations, offending techniques, and psychometric details. By examining contextual factors such as family dynamics, peer influences, and socio-economic conditions, research can uncover underlying drivers of OGBV perpetration and inform targeted interventions.

◆ Collaborate with tech platforms to analyse their data and target-reported data to identify patterns of dynamics between targets and offenders. The analysis of these patterns, experiences, and behaviours could help to uncover potential critical points when/where the platform interventions are crucial to prevent or ameliorate OGBV. This information can serve multiple stakeholders, including platforms, to inform the development of prevention strategies and more efficient complaint systems, as well as support mechanisms tailored to specific populations at risk.

◆ Investigate payment systems' role in OGBV by analysing transactional data and conducting case studies to identify patterns of financial exploitation and inform policy and regulatory responses aimed at disrupting financial incentives for perpetrators. A similar approach could be relevant with companies that hire perpetrators (particularly publicity agencies), especially during election campaigns, to build out a profile of individuals typically targeted, and work with those survivor individuals or organisations that are attacked, as well as to build an inventory of instances and close the data gap.

◆ Engage with relevant stakeholders, including survivors, advocacy groups, and ethical review boards, to ensure that research activities are conducted responsibly and ethically. Understanding perpetrators also involves ethical considerations, including issues related to privacy, consent, and the responsible use of data, and mitigating potential risks of harm. Integrating ethical guidelines into research practices is crucial for ensuring the integrity and impact of the research, and researchers should prioritise ethical considerations in all stages of research, including data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

◆ Digital labour platforms must improve internal policies, products and enforcement to identify perpetrators (I.e., customers and even peer workers) in their platforms and act accordingly quickly. Research could analyse how automated systems fail to flag OGBV or provide answers to certain workers within the platform. It could also investigate how these algorithms fail to detect behaviour patterns of individuals within the platform economy that could be qualified as OGBV.

◆ Conduct qualitative studies to explore the experiences and motivations of trolls, including those who engage in trolling for fun and entertainment. By understanding their underlying motivations, social dynamics, and potential age-related influences, researchers can develop targeted interventions to mitigate trolling behaviour and promote positive online interactions.

◆ Improve data collection mechanisms that better characterize the depths of the psychological effect of OGBV in targets, and further tune develop and enforce policies aimed at supporting targets of OGBV in the aftermath of an online attack to avoid the mental toll and potential traumatic effects (including the risks of survivors ultimately becoming OGBV perpetrators).

◆ Support organizations that directly engage with male perpetrators, recognizing the need for distinct approaches compared to those for female perpetrators. Additionally, promote initiatives aimed at reshaping notions of masculinity towards more positive ideals. This effort could be integrated into a broader examination of restorative justice practices and rehabilitation programs tailored specifically for perpetrators of OGBV.

3. Effective behavioural change strategies and interventions to potentially mitigate or prevent motives behind OGBV

Data discussed during the project suggested that there appears to be a clear connection between online and offline behaviours, particularly among younger generations, requiring research that transcends digital boundaries. These behaviours may also be influenced by the consumption of toxic masculinist content on social media and affiliations with right-wing ideologically focused organisations.

Information that stresses understanding and addressing online behaviours alone may overlook crucial factors contributing to OGBV outside the tech-driven context. Socio-demographic characteristics, local societal norms, influence, motivations, and behaviours intertwine with their actions in both spheres. In this sense, focusing solely on online behaviour may neglect underlying issues that manifest offline and vice-versa. By establishing behaviour change as a baseline study, we can further explore these interconnected dynamics, ensuring interventions target the root causes effectively and in a multi-faceted way.

From our discussions, we have discovered the use of various behavioural change strategies and interventions to mitigate OGBV potentially. For instance, encouraging outreach from trusted loved ones, peer condemnation of OGBV and support, utilising law enforcement for intervention, and promoting 'healthier masculinities' in media are actions that not only address online behaviours but also target underlying attitudes and beliefs that may manifest offline. Similarly, integrating a mental health focus into initiatives targeting OGBV acknowledges the complex interplay between mental well-being and online behaviour. This includes providing support services and resources for both victims and perpetrators who may be struggling with mental health issues, addressing underlying factors that contribute to OGBV perpetration.

Furthermore, implementing safety-by-design principles[10] ensures the prevention of OGBV by embedding safety features into digital platforms, like privacy settings and reporting mechanisms. These strategies bridge the gap between online and offline contexts, recognizing the interconnected nature of OGBV dynamics.

The workshops also emphasised the importance of broadened communication and engagement beyond traditional audience demographics. Recognising perpetrators as a diverse group with varying motivations and backgrounds necessitates a holistic understanding of their behaviours and experiences. Behaviour change studies serve as a crucial starting point for uncovering these nuances and tailoring interventions to address specific needs effectively.

However, we have also found that there is not much data available about how to engage perpetrators in behaviour change initiatives or the effectiveness of these on a large scale. We, therefore, consider it important to prioritise behaviour change as a baseline study, so we can assess the efficacy of interventions aimed at modifying harmful behaviours. This approach enables us to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions aimed at modifying harmful behaviours. Such assessments are crucial for guiding informed decision-making and designing evidence-based strategies, as well as for resource allocation. Moreover, it's important to acknowledge the further potential of engaging reformed perpetrators as informants for behavioural change strategies, thereby enriching our understanding and enhancing the efficacy of interventions.

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10   Due to market dominance and prevalence, a particular attention to social media companies was given in all the different conversations.

Possible pathways:

◆ Conduct research to identify factors that contribute to behaviour change and inform interventions aimed at preventing re-engagement in OGBV. Additionally, explore adjacent spaces, such as countering religious extremism, to understand how these movements handle perpetrators and promote positive behavioural change.

◆ Involving platforms in understanding and implementing technology-driven interventions is crucial for addressing OGBV perpetration comprehensively. Beyond content moderation, platforms can design features that nudge users towards less violent online behaviour, such as prompts encouraging reflection before posting. Collaborating with researchers and experts, platforms can refine interventions based on data analysis and user feedback, ensuring their efficacy. Additionally, platforms can provide resources and support for users at risk of perpetrating OGBV, promoting respectful online interactions and fostering safer digital environments for all.

◆ Funding to address the challenges associated with financing larger movements that utilise workshops involving young people for behaviour change. These funds will contribute to shift the focus from punitive measures to constructive interventions. Increased funding is necessary to support collective action, education, and research into perpetrator demographics and motivations, all of which are vital for the development and implementation of effective intervention strategies.

◆ Learn from existing programs designed to address perpetration and carefully assess the effectiveness of interventions, specifically focusing on assessing platform intervention mechanisms.

◆ Investigate the role of technological interventions in mitigating OGBV, such as enhancing content moderation mechanisms (in various languages), reporting channels, and due process requirements across diverse online platforms. Design "nudges" towards help/resources and implements safety by design principles in online spaces. Design product-based nudges that discourage and prohibit OGBV.

◆ Investigate the feasibility and impact of community-driven approaches in fostering a culture of accountability, promoting healthier attitudes towards gender and sexuality, and empowering bystanders to intervene effectively both online and offline.

METHODOLOGIES AND APPROACH FOR BASELINE STUDY

During the process of this project, some of the most prominent methodologies for researching perpetrators of sexual and OGBV include quantitative methods such as desk research, surveys, and social network data analysis, as well as qualitative methods such as literature/scoping reviews and interviews with survivors. Snowballing techniques are also used to collect survivors' experiences. Moreover, mixed-methods combining surveys, interviews and data analysis are used.

We can mention some of the selected studies that offer valuable insights to inform further research methodologies when approaching OGBV perpetrators' research. Namely, the Australian Study on tech-facilitated abuse underscores the necessity of a multi-pronged methodology, incorporating surveys, interviews with survivors and perpetrators, and engagement with decision-makers to comprehensively understand the nature of perpetrators. Similarly, the UN Women study on technology-facilitated violence against women advocates for diverse data collection methods, including social media data analysis, empirical data collection, and interviews, while also highlighting the importance of addressing gaps in research beyond perpetrator-focused investigations.

The Australian study on perpetrator intervention systems also showcases the effectiveness of representative sample methodologies, such as the National Community Attitudes Survey, in tracking changing attitudes towards violence against women over time. Furthermore, the report on working with perpetrators of domestic violence in the Eastern Partnership Region provides valuable methodology guidance for intervention programs. Finally, insights from studies like "Images of Violence" and "The Incelosphere" stress the significance of mixed-method approaches and large-scale data collection to comprehensively understand online violence dynamics and the behaviours of specific groups, such as incels[11], while also revealing the nuanced dynamics within these communities. Incorporating these insights into the suggested baseline studies would ensure a robust and holistic approach to studying trolling effects on OGBV.

Additionally, during the TPDLs, emphasis was placed on ethical considerations, highlighting the importance of integrating ethical guidelines into research practices, especially for maintaining integrity and impact. Also, it highlighted the importance of considering community-based approaches, ensuring fair compensation, trust-building and ethical review board approval. As such, Participatory Action Research (PAR), Healing justice Principles as well as the Third Way Black Feminism Framework could be taken into account, which actively involves community members in the research process, empowering them as co-researchers and ensuring that the research is relevant and responsive to their lived experiences. Additionally, by incorporating Indigenous research methodologies and other culturally appropriate methods, researchers can provide valuable insights and foster a deeper understanding of the sociocultural contexts in which OGBV perpetration occurs.

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11 Incel is the acronym for involuntary celibates. It is a term closely associated with an online subculture of people (mostly white, male, and heterosexual) who define themselves as unable to get a romantic or sexual partner despite desiring one. More information here https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incel

Techniques and tools used to gather data from the identified sources:		
Literature review & desk research	Surveys & Interviews (i.e.: with survivors and caregivers)	Ecosystem mapping
Use of Qualtrics panel system	Cross-sectional studies	Network analysis
Social media data analysis	Snowballing technique to gather information from survivors	Snowballing to identify survivor experiences and potential types of perpetrators
Monitoring and data analysis	Nudge-based approaches	Analysis of cultural and social contexts
		Crowd-sourced data through survivor interviews

SOCIALISATION PROCESS AND NEXT STEPS

Following thorough feedback and refinement, the final tested research roadmap will be formally launched and disseminated through the WRO network members, ensuring broad accessibility and utilisation of the roadmap's insights and recommendations in combating OGBV perpetrators effectively. It should ensure that the roadmap reaches key stakeholders, including tech companies, policymakers, academia, and advocacy groups.

By sharing this research roadmap with stakeholders from across the globe it is intended to increase the number of high-quality research studies conducted on OGBV perpetrator motivations, behaviours, and demographics by expanding the geographic and cultural diversity represented in OGBV perpetrator research data. This also will improve the availability and accessibility of non-English datasets for training OGBV detection models across tech platforms.

Over the implementation phase, monitoring mechanisms must be established to track progress in combating OGBV perpetration. Key actions include analyzing the quantity, quality, and diversity of research studies produced through the roadmap suggestions. Surveys and interviews with researchers, survivors, and stakeholders will gather feedback on effectiveness, challenges and areas of improvements. An external evaluation team will conduct independent assessments to provide insights into progress, lessons learned, and recommendations for adjustments.

Moreover, in any collaboration involving platforms, tech companies, and state authorities, it's imperative to conduct pre-assessments to ensure that engagements are purpose-driven and mutually beneficial. Simply convening meetings with representatives from these entities is no longer sufficient; instead, there must be clear objectives, mandates, and expected outcomes from such interactions. Each party should have a well-defined role and responsibilities, with specific asks and deliverables outlined from the outset. Moreover, any initiatives or data obtained from these collaborations should be shared back with the community, ensuring transparency and accountability. It's essential to recognize that true progress is not measured solely by the act of engagement but by the tangible results achieved and the positive impact on addressing issues such as OGBV perpetration.