A How-To Guide for Institutions & Organizations: Combating TFVAW in Egypt

Women of Egypt Network

As digital spaces become increasingly central to our personal, professional, and social lives, so too do the risks that come with them—especially for women and girls. Technology-facilitated violence against women (TFVAW) is a growing global issue that affects safety, well-being, and equal participation online and offline. Institutions such as NGOs, workplaces, schools, youth organizations, and online communities have a unique opportunity—and responsibility—to lead change. This guide is designed to support these institutions with practical strategies to prevent harm, respond effectively, and create safer, more inclusive environments for all.

How to Build a Workplace Policy Against TFVAW

Technology-facilitated violence against women (TFVAW) doesn't stay confined to the internet—it can follow individuals into their workplaces, affecting their mental health, sense of safety, and ability to thrive professionally. Even if your organization isn't tech-focused, your staff may still be targets of online harassment or abuse. A well-crafted workplace policy sends a clear message: your organization recognizes the impact of TFVAW and is committed to protecting and supporting employees through concrete action.

Start with a Clear Policy Statement

"Our organization does not tolerate any form of technology-facilitated violence, including harassment, threats, or abuse through digital platforms — inside or outside the workplace."

Core Components of an Effective Policy:

1. **Definition of TFVAW**

Clearly define what constitutes technology-facilitated violence—such as online harassment, doxxing, non-consensual image sharing, cyberstalking, hate speech, and threats. Include examples to help staff understand the scope. Encourage respectful behavior across all work-related chats, groups, and digital platforms.

Make it explicit that sharing private images or personal data without consent is strictly prohibited.

2. Scope of Protection

Specify that the policy applies to all employees, contractors, interns, and volunteers—regardless of their location or the device/platform used. Make it clear that abuse outside work hours or off-site is still taken seriously.

3. Reporting Mechanisms

Outline how employees can safely and confidentially report incidents. Provide multiple reporting options (e.g., HR, a designated officer, anonymous channels) to accommodate different comfort levels.

Create a confidential and accessible system for reporting digital abuse, such as an anonymous email address or hotline.

Designate trained focal persons to handle complaints sensitively and discreetly.

Ensure there is no retaliation against anyone who reports incidents—especially women and junior staff.

4. Response Procedures

Describe how reports will be handled—promptly, confidentially, and with a trauma-informed approach. Clarify the steps taken to investigate, resolve, and follow up on incidents.

5. Support for Affected Staff

Provide clear support systems for employees who experience technology-facilitated violence. This can include access to counseling services, flexible leave or work arrangements, legal assistance (where applicable), and referrals to external resources. Reassure staff that they will not face retaliation for speaking up. Consider partnering with women's rights organizations such as Nazra, CEWLA, or other NGOs that provide assistance to strengthen your support network.

6. Preventive Measures & Training

Commit to regular staff training on digital safety, safe and professional digital engagement, online harassment, and bystander intervention. These trainings help build a culture of respect and awareness both online and offline.

7. Disciplinary Actions

Clearly state the consequences of violating the policy, whether the perpetrator is internal or external. Ensure consistency and fairness in enforcement.

8. Review and Update Process

Set a timeline for reviewing and updating the policy—ideally every 12 to 18 months—to reflect new risks, technologies, and legal developments.

📌 **Tip: Engage male staff in awareness sessions — not just women. TFVAW is everyone's concern.**

How to Create Safe Online Spaces for Women in Your Community

Online communities offer powerful opportunities for connection, support, and advocacy, but they can also expose women to harassment, exclusion, and harm. Whether you manage a WhatsApp group for youth, a Facebook group for moms, or an NGO's digital platform, it's essential to establish clear guidelines and actively moderate to ensure everyone feels safe, respected, and included. This section provides practical steps to help you build and maintain welcoming online spaces where women can thrive.

Build the Space With Intention

Set community rules: Clearly state zero tolerance for hate speech, shaming, or harassment. Pin these rules in your group/website.

Approve members thoughtfully : Screen profiles before allowing them into private groups.

Assign trained moderators: At least one moderator should be female, empathetic, and digitally literate.

Have a reporting mechanism: Allow users to privately report abuse. Respond immediately.

Effective Response Strategies

Even with the best prevention, problems can occur in online spaces. It's crucial to act quickly and thoughtfully to address abusive behavior—protecting users, maintaining trust, and reinforcing community standards. The following steps outline how to respond effectively when issues arise.

🛠️ **When Issues Arise:**
  • Remove abusive content immediately.

- Warn or remove violators based on the severity.
- Offer the affected user support and options — do not ignore or silence them.

📌 **Create a culture of trust: Women should feel that if something happens, they will be heard and protected.**

How to Advocate for Stronger Legal Protections Against TFVAW

Technology-facilitated violence against women (TFVAW) is a growing issue that demands stronger legal safeguards. While Egypt has taken important steps—such as enacting Law No. 175/2018 on cybercrimes—gaps remain, and many survivors still face barriers to justice. Many cases still go unreported or unresolved.

Institutions and organizations can play a powerful role in pushing for legal reform and community leaders can play a key role in driving legal reform and raising awareness. This section outlines how you can contribute to building a safer and more just digital landscape.

Step-by-Step Advocacy Framework:

1. Understand Existing Laws

- Study Egyptian cybercrime and harassment laws.
- Identify gaps — e.g., laws may not cover deepfakes, impersonation, or non-consensual image sharing clearly.

2. Gather Evidence & Data

- Conduct anonymous surveys or focus groups with women and youth in your community.

- Partner with academic or women's rights organizations to publish reports.

- Document stories ethically — only with consent, anonymize where needed.

3. Use Strategic Storytelling

- Real-life, survivor-led narratives move hearts and policies.

- Use stories to engage the media, influencers, and public figures.

4. Push for Change

- Engage MPs, the National Council for Women, and digital rights coalitions.

- Host roundtables or online campaigns calling for:

- Clearer definitions of digital abuse.

- Stronger penalties for TFVAW.

- Safe reporting pathways for youth and women.

📌 **Remember: Laws don't change on their own — but they can change when communities speak with one voice.**

Conclusion

Institutions shape culture — and culture, in turn, shapes safety. Whether you're leading a workplace, school, youth organization, NGO, or online community, your stance on technology-facilitated violence against women (TFVAW) sends a powerful message. By actively working to prevent and respond to digital abuse, you help set new norms — ones that prioritize dignity, equity, and accountability.

Change doesn't happen in isolation. Every policy you implement, every safe space you build, and every survivor you support contributes to a broader movement toward digital justice.

Protecting women and youth online isn't a "nice to have."
It's a human right.
It's a social responsibility.
It's a path to real, lasting change.