



IWD 2022

#BreakTheBias

Creating safe online spaces for
young women and girls

WORKSHOP REPORT



Background and Introduction

The 8th of March is set aside every year to commemorate the International Women's Day (IWD). This is a day when women are recognised for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. This year's IWD campaign theme was #BreakTheBias which calls for everyone to actively contribute towards a world that is free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination.

The Zimbabwe Information and Technology Empowerment Trust (ZITET) in partnership with Nduna Girls Trust joined the world in commemorating the International Women's Day by holding a workshop that sought to educate young women and girls on how to engage safely in online spaces. Cyberbullying and harassment of women and girls is on the rise which affects their psychological and social well-being. Depression caused by online harassment sometimes leads to suicides among young women and girls. With young women and girls spending more time online than before due to the COVID-19 pandemic and advances in technology, it is imperative that they are empowered with skills and knowledge on how to engage in online spaces responsibly.

It is against this background that on the 12th of March, 2022, the Zimbabwe Information and Technology Empowerment Trust (ZITET) and Nduna Girls Trust convened a workshop to empower young women between the ages of 18-22 with knowledge and skills on how to stay safe online. The objective of the workshop was to commemorate the 2022 International Women's Day under the theme 'Gender Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow #BreakTheBias. The workshop adopted a participatory methodology that comprised of presentations and plenary discussions on specific topics that included Online Safety, Gender Based Cyber Violence, the Data Protection Act of 2021 and best practices online as a content creator and as a consumer. The workshop was attended by young women and girls from diverse backgrounds from peri-urban and urban communities as well as higher and tertiary education institutions, ZITET members and secretariat and Nduna Girls Trust secretariat. The total number of participants was twenty-two (22) young women and girls. The workshop started at 0900hrs and ended at 1200hrs.

The event provided a platform for young women to safely engage online, make use of technology to celebrate and amplify women's voices and to identify unsafe online spaces. Additionally, the event provided a networking opportunity for young women and girls.

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Key Highlights


The following are the key highlights of the workshop.

- i. The workshop was characterised of presentations and plenary sessions. A presentation about online safety exposed participants to an in-depth understanding of the importance of online safety as well as technical and social threats that they might be exposed to. Notable examples were drawn from hacking, cyber bullying, cyber flashing especially from unknown individuals, hate speech and cyber stalking particularly from social media sites and the most topical phrase to describe perpetrators of cyber stalking was named 'secret admirers'. The major follow up question from young women and girls was on how they can be safe in WhatsApp groups.
- ii. A discussion was also stirred on the issue of Gender Based Cyber Violence that was contextualised as gendered abuse targeting women and girls. The house agreed to the fact that the Internet opens a whole world of abuse, thus the need to have digital literacy skills to be aware of how to safely engage online the same way people do physically. Hence the term netiquette was emphasized as relating to etiquette in the physical world.
- iii. Participants were also exposed to the existing legal frameworks for online engagements in Zimbabwe. Particular reference was given to the Data Protection Act of 2021 as a legal document that increases protection and confidence in the online world. Participants were enlightened on the importance of consent as espoused in the legal document.
- iv. For safer online engagements participants were equipped with knowledge and skills for best practices online as a content creator and as a consumer. Young women and girls need to be cognizant of intention of creating online content, create strong passwords to protect personal data and be aware of fake opportunities such as job adverts and scholarships.

#BreakTheBias


International Women's Day Online Campaign

International Women's Day



#BreakTheBias

Women should unapologetically speak against gender biases every time.
The moment is now!
-Ruvimbo-



International Women's Day



#BreakTheBias

If you can't be the legs that stands up towards a cause, be the voice that gives the moral for the legs to keep standing
-Munyaradzi-



International Women's Day



#BreakTheBias

The tech field is often regarded as a space for men. In order to make strides in promoting equality in the tech industry, women and girls should be given equal and unbiased opportunities
-Nancy-



International Women's Day




#BreakTheBias

Being a women is not easy, let us break all bonds of injustices and oppression towards women so that will fulfill the Agenda goal #5 of SDGs in order to come up with a better world.
Lets respect women!




International Women's Day



#BreakTheBias

The thing women have yet to learn is nobody gives you power. You just take it
-Natasha-



International Women's Day



#BreakTheBias

Individually we are all responsible for our own thoughts and actions.
all day, everyday!
-Eugenia-



#BreakTheBias

International Women's Day Commemorations in Pictures



Ms Grace Msauki Presenting on Online Safety (ZITET)



Miss Netsai Zuze Giving Opening Remarks (Nduna Girls)



Participants Striking the IWD 2022 Pose #BreakTheBias



#BreakTheBias



Participants During Group Discussions on Online Safety



Organising Team from ZITET and Nduna Girls Trust

#BreakTheBias