

SURF SMART 2.0



GENERATION **DIGITAL**

ESSAY COMPILATION

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WORLD ASSOCIATION
OF GIRL GUIDES
AND GIRL SCOUTS



norton™

SURF WISELY (UGGA)

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In the digital age, the internet has become an integral part of our daily lives, transforming the way we communicate, learn, and interact. However, with the rapid growth of online platforms, issues such as cyberbullying, harassment, and exclusion have emerged as significant challenges. Girls and young women, as active participants in the online world, play a crucial role in advocating for an inclusive, safer, and better internet.

Below are some of the strategies girls and young women can explore their impact, highlighting their contributions in shaping a more positive online environment;

1. Empowering Voices:

Girls and young women are harnessing the power of social media to raise awareness about cyberbullying, body shaming, and gender-based violence. Through online campaigns, they share personal experiences, fostering empathy and understanding among peers. By speaking out, they challenge harmful stereotypes and contribute to building a culture of respect and acceptance on the internet.

2. Promoting Digital Literacy:

Educating girls and young women about digital literacy is key to their active participation in online discussions. Initiatives that teach coding, online safety, and critical thinking empower them to navigate the internet responsibly. Armed with knowledge, they are better equipped to identify misinformation, protect their privacy, and counter online threats, creating a safer online space for all users.

3. Fostering Inclusivity:

Girls and young women advocate for inclusivity by promoting diverse voices and perspectives online. They celebrate differences, challenge discriminatory narratives, and champion the rights of marginalized communities. Through their advocacy, they create virtual environments where everyone feels valued and respected, fostering a sense of belonging and community online.

. 4. Engaging in Policy Advocacy:

Young female activists are increasingly engaging with policymakers and tech companies to influence internet governance. They advocate for policies that protect users from online harassment, ensure data privacy, and promote digital access for all. By actively participating in legislative processes, they contribute to shaping laws that make the internet a safer and more inclusive space.

5. Inspiring Positive Role Models:

Girls and young women who excel in various fields are becoming influential role models online. Their success stories inspire others to pursue their passions fearlessly. By showcasing their achievements, they challenge gender norms and empower fellow girls to aspire for greatness, encouraging a new generation of confident, empowered internet users.

6. Resource young individuals through financing and mentorship.

Young people may not have access to the financial resources needed to join global spaces. And although young people are capable and have the ability, knowledge, and skills to co-create impactful solutions, it cannot be assumed that all young people have the same level of access to training and mentorship, and therefore confidence, that will support them in feeling able to share their perspectives, opinions, and solutions, in a way that will be listened to by people from older generations. Therefore, it is vital that young people are adequately supported and resourced so that they can access and influence advocacy spaces.

7. Break down the barriers for youth-led organisations.

Where decision-makers are funding youth-led organisations, there needs to be an understanding that funding does not mean ownership. Presumably, to fund it in the first place, there is an understanding that the organisation had devised a strong agenda that serves to provide solutions to the problems that need addressing. So, decision-makers need to support youth-led organisations to implement that agenda, and not try to change their agenda. Funding processes also need to be realistic for youth-led organisations, especially those that are small or new. They may not have the infrastructure or existing resourcing in place to meet the “typical” criteria for funding applications, such as having a registered office. These become barriers to accessing the resources required to provide youth-led solutions.

8. Up-skill in the areas you need.

Locate the right mentor who will support you on your advocacy journey. Continually update your knowledge so that your advocacy actions always come from a strong evidence-based approach. Continue to develop your communications skills – knowing and understanding your audience, your message, and how you can convey that message to your audience is critical to being impactful.

.9. Build networks.

Collaborate on different platforms - in person or online - to build community and raise awareness. Networking can help you seize opportunities, connect you with people who share the same passion and share information and communication among peers. It will help you better understand the cause you are advocating for and how it affects others. Networking will help your advocacy become more inclusive and broaden your perspective. You can network by attending events like Women Deliver, using social media or online platforms.

10. And finally, don't give up!

Sometimes the pressures feel exhausting, and advocacy spaces can feel frustrating. Put your mental and physical health first, be prepared for the setbacks and challenges. Change takes time, so be patient. But a big change is made up of lots of small changes over a long period of time. So most importantly, never give up on your vision.

In conclusion, the active involvement of girls and young women in advocating for an inclusive, safer, and better internet is indispensable. Their voices, combined with digital literacy, inclusivity, policy advocacy, and positive role modeling, create a powerful force for change. As they continue to shape the online landscape, they pave the way for a more equitable and respectful internet, benefiting current and future generations alike. By fostering a sense of responsibility and community, they are instrumental in building a digital world where everyone can thrive.



UGANDA GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION (UGGA)

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| 1. Nyamungu
Chelsea | 3. Kyazike Dinah |
| 2. Ndagire Christine | 4. Namubiru Jovia |
| | 5. Nakawuma Karen. |

One may correctly define the 21st century as the age of science and technology. However, this has been possible not only by the efforts of the current generation but also by the previous generation. The result of one such advancement in the field of science and technology is the Internet. What is the Internet? So, the internet can be called a connected group of networks that enable electronic communication. It is considered to be the world's largest communication connecting millions of users.

The dependence on the internet has been because of multiple advantages that it has to offer – for instance, reducing work stress and changing the face of communication. Given the current scenario, the Internet has become a massive part of our daily life, and it is now a challenging task to imagine the world without the Internet. The importance of the Internet in the field of communication definitely cannot be ignored. Without access to the internet, the ability to share thoughts and ideas across the globe would have been just a dream.

Today we can talk to people all over the globe only because of services like email, messenger, etc. that are heavily reliant on the internet. Without the internet, it would be hard to imagine how large the world would be. The youth are mainly attracted by the entertainment services, streaming platforms like Amazon, Netflix, and YouTube have also gained immense popularity among internet users. In addition to these, it has various recreational advantages to offer as well for instance, people can search for fun videos to watch and play games online with friends and other people all over the globe.

Unfortunately, the internet spaces also open up a whole world of abuse, false information, and, the online abuse that is disempowering girls every day. Women who are visible on the internet face different forms of online abuse and challenges, among these are cyberbullying, sexual harassment, non- consensual imagery, hate speech, body shaming, hacking to mention but a few all these which result into; issues like mental health issues,

stress, low self-esteem, to mention but a few. However, girls and young women are spending a huge amount of time online, driven by a quest for connection and information, and the desire to extend their knowledge beyond what they learn from their families, schools and communities. The opportunities the internet presents are boundless. It provides an outlet for individuals to express their opinions and engage in debate around the issues that matter to them. It has also enabled them to access educational opportunities, start businesses and participate in the global economy.

The role of girls and young women in advocating for an inclusive, safer and better internet involves;

- Sensitizing girls and young women on the dangers of sharing personal information, photos and videos online with the people they do not know in real life.
- Educating girls and young women about body safety and boundaries while on the internet.
- Empowering them to speak out on the issues affecting them on the internet.
- Creating alliances with the social media companies to take urgent action to address the issues of online abuse on their platforms, engaging stakeholders and decision makers to address and take action on the issue of online abuse.
- Using the Power of Online Petitions since they are a valuable tool for growing a community through sharing efforts and they are easy to be shared on social media platforms.
- Carrying out online campaigns on social media platforms in order to raise awareness and educate people on the issues that young women and girls face on the internet and encourage them to push for change.
- Collaborating with digital inclusive programs in order to leverage cyberspace for a safer internet in our effort to achieve gender equality / inclusion.

In conclusion, we can say the internet holds immense importance in today's era. Internet technology has indeed changed the dynamics of how we communicate, respond or entertain ourselves. Its importance in everyday life is never-ending. It can be correctly said that the internet plays a great role in the enhancement of quality of life, however the internet also has issues such as; online abuse and harassment that caused serious effects to the people who use it most especially the girls and young women. Because of this, it is very important for policy makers and lawmakers to push for checks and balances that make the Internet safe for women and girls and open to everyone.

EXPLORING A GENERATION OF THE DIGITAL WORLD (UGGA)

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| 1. NANKYA SAUDAH | 3. ANGOM LINDA DOROTHY |
| 2. NABIFO IRENE | 4. ASITERU HOPE VIVIAN |
| | 5. MWOGERE LILIAN |

It is worth noting that the internet has played a tremendous role to people regardless of gender, race and age. Its values stretch from research purposes, knowledge expansion to networking and entertainment among others.

Positively, we can commend the internet for having created a readily available platform for young women to carryout research and ascertain information regardless of location provided the gadget is connected to a network server. Besides, the internet has also been instrumental in strengthening connections between people thru the various social media platforms like Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, among others. These encourage communication and use of emotions all of which are Paramount in expression of feeling. Not only that, the internet is also instrumental in entertainment e.g. online games which breaks the monotony around them as well as keeping their brains active. In addition, many people have been employed online through the internet and are actually earning a living from online jobs and other physical jobs.

Much as we ought to appreciate the internet for its tremendous role in uplifting communities, we should not overlook the positivity and encouragement we get from it. However, there are also challenges and obstacles one faces due to internet use as expressed below;

- Internet users especially men have a tendency of indulging in cyber bullying. These could be those that have ever been in a relationship with that lady and eventually broken up. They tend to share the sensitive and intimate content they exchanged during their merry days which gets the victim in a situation of emotional damage due to criticism and backlash from viewers.

Sometimes it is done by extortionists who attempt to taint the image of some influential women before the public eye if they do not give them the amount requested.

- Women also face sexual harassment as a result of internet use. This is mainly done by those in long distance relationships who are fond of sexting and using other explicit content in the name of sustaining their relationship and saving it from breaking. However, this also has undesirable effects on the persons involved especially the women since this can later be used against them.
- The younger generation are more likely to experience internet addiction. This has implications on memory, cognitive ability. Academic literature suggests there is a link between social media use and mental health which lead to anxiety, depression and poor academic performance.

A report conducted by Unwanted Witnesses has indicated that over 72% of female users of internet in Uganda face cases of cyber bullying and harassments. The report also indicates that the cases of online violence against women in Uganda are as a result of weak Legal and Institutional Frameworks that have left perpetrators free.

A recent report by the UN Agency for children showed that one in every three young people in over 30 countries have been victims of Online Bullying with at least one in every five affected children reporting having skipped school due to Cyber Bullying and Violence.

In Uganda, the study indicated that out of the 4057 respondents aged 15-24 years, at least 40% had been victims of online violence and cyberbullying and this happens on social media platforms.

- Leaving all the above aside, many countries have set up terms and conditions governing the internet as a way of regulating internet misuse. However, these have not been too effective since no feasible consequences have been put in place to ensure that these terms and conditions are observed. This has led to an increase in internet abuse, young adults and teenagers have fallen victims because the perpetrators are left scot-free while those affected face the aftermath effects.
- In Uganda, no authentic criteria are followed to verify whether the person attempting to open up a given account on any social media platform is in existence to ensure that the person has reached the due age to surf and get that particular piece of information or even owning that social media account. No wonder there are increased cases of emotional damage among teens and youths.
- Bloggers have been time and again found of pronouncing people dead, like the Kabaka of Buganda, the president and other influential personnel have been announced dead on several occasions. This affects the family members of these different people because it takes an emotional toll on them. Surprisingly, none of these people have been put to the law. Nudes of different women have been leaked like those of Desire Luzinda, Sheila Gashumba and Anita Fabiola have been put to public display and these women faced psychological torture and some people still use this information against them. Sadly, none of the perpetrators from the named incidents has been put to law.

As a means of promoting Online Safety;

- Young women can design gender responsive digital policies which necessitates calling for policy makers in the digital field to pay attention to the unique needs of women and girls, valuing their perspectives, experiences and intentionally considering them when designing, implementing and measuring programs and policies.
- Young women can also fight Cyber violence against girls and young women by putting in place several practices to protect the rights of women e.g. online harassment reporting mechanisms and abuse policies.

Cyber Security training and awareness campaigns, digital literacy programs can also be conducted.

- Advocacy Strategies such as Online Campaigning can be used to advance advocacy initiatives thus raising awareness and educating people to publicize issues and push for change.
- Lobbying can also be carried out i.e. requesting government representatives from the Ministry of ICT to do something to support the cause of the advocacy campaign. This necessitates collecting signatures are from all the affected people thus strengthening their voice and fronting their agenda on all social media.

In conclusion, although the internet system eases life, it is very unfortunate that it has also been used to destroy and abuse others thus Young Women and girls must play a big role in Advocating for an inclusive, safer and Better Internet.

“THE ROLE OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN ADVOCATING FOR AN INCLUSIVE, SAFER AND BETTER INTERNET” (UGGA)

1. Joan Nakawuki
2. Karen Banyira
3. Faith Asuko
4. Eunice Kajja
5. Agnes Muhindo
6. Hellen Apio
7. Sophia Nabbale

The Internet, sometimes called simply "the Net," is a worldwide system of computer networks-- a network of networks in which users at any one computer can, if they have permission, get information from any other computer (and sometimes talk directly to users at other computers).

Talking About Internet and anything Technology related, it has always been usually associated to men but Global internet access rate 2019-2022, by gender as of 2022, the share of the male population in the world that used the internet was nearly 70 percent, compared to 63 percent of the female population.

In Uganda as a country, according to The Digital Reportal “Digital 2023: Uganda” By Simon Kemp, there were 11.77 million internet users in Uganda in January 2023. Uganda’s internet penetration rate stood at 24.6 percent of the total population at the start of 2023. Kepios analysis indicates that internet users in Uganda increased by 1.0 million (+9.4 percent) between 2022 and 2023.

when we go ahead in exploring the internet, we discover that there so many opportunities that the internet provides for example;

- **Information Access:** The internet is a vast repository of information. It allows people to access a wealth of knowledge, research, news, and educational materials.
- **Communication:** It enables real-time communication through email, instant messaging, video calls, and social media, connecting people across the globe.
- **Education:** Online courses, e-learning platforms, and educational resources make it possible for people to learn new skills and pursue degrees from anywhere.
- **Business and Employment:** The internet facilitates e-commerce, remote work, and freelancing, offering opportunities for entrepreneurship and employment.
- **Networking:** It allows individuals to connect with professionals, mentors, and like-minded people globally, fostering networking and career growth.
- **Content Creation:** Platforms like YouTube, blogs, and social media enable content creators to reach large audiences and potentially monetize their work.
- **Research and Innovation:** Researchers can collaborate and access data and resources globally, accelerating scientific and technological advancements.
- **E-Government:** Governments use the internet to provide services, offer information, and engage with citizens, enhancing transparency and efficiency.
- **Healthcare:** Telemedicine and health information online offer access to medical advice and resources, improving healthcare accessibility.
- **Entertainment:** Streaming services, online gaming, and social media offer entertainment and leisure activities.
- Other opportunities include Social Change and Activism, Global Market Access, collaboration, personal growth, crisis response, E-Governance, cultural exchange, accessibility and environmental awareness.

However, despite the numerous opportunities the internet has to offer, there are various challenges that are still faced on the internet for instance:

- **Limited digital literacy:** not everyone out there knows how to navigate the internet and this hinders a lot of people from accessing the internet and even not making good use of internet productivity.
- **Gender Gap;** There is often a gender gap in internet access, with fewer girls and women having access compared to boys and men. This can be attributed to factors like affordability and social norms.
- **Cost of internet:** internet bundles are also quite costly and not everyone in the country is able to afford them.
- **Limited connectivity:** in some areas within the country especially the villages, there isn't any internet access so for the young girls and women in those areas, they aren't able to access the internet.
- **Internet addiction:** in as much as use of the internet is good, some few people end up being addicted to being on the internet and this reduces their productivity as human beings and also affects their mental health in the long run.

- Inappropriate use of the internet; there has been a lot of misuse of the internet lately such watching porn on the internet, uploading nude videos and pictures on the internet.
- Despite the challenges, we believe that we as girls and young women, we can promote online safety through advocacy as follows:
- Digital Literacy Programs: Advocate for and support digital literacy programs that teach people, especially youth, how to use the internet safely, critically assess online content, and protect their privacy.
- Online Safety Awareness: Raise awareness about online safety and responsible digital citizenship through public campaigns and educational materials to combat cyberbullying and harassment.
- Inclusive Internet Access: Promote policies and initiatives that bridge the digital divide, ensuring that underserved communities have access to affordable, reliable internet.
- Diverse Representation: Advocate for diverse representation in technology and content creation to challenge biases and stereotypes on the internet.
- Strong Data Privacy Regulations: Push for robust data privacy regulations to protect individuals' personal information and give them more control over their data.
- Anti-Disinformation Campaigns: Support initiatives that combat online misinformation and disinformation through fact-checking and media literacy programs.
- Transparency Initiatives: Encourage transparency from internet companies regarding content moderation, algorithms, and data practices.
- Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: Promote collaboration among governments, civil society, academia, and industry to collectively address online challenges.
- Evolving Regulations: Advocate for responsive and adaptable regulations that keep pace with the evolving nature of the internet.
- Online Civic Engagement: Encourage the use of the internet for civic engagement, voting, and participation in democratic processes.
- We are working on a campaign to share with the Ministry of ICT so that the internet bundle costs can be reduced so that young girls and women can easily access the internet and also use it for marketing their products especially for those venturing in the business world.

In conclusion, Advocacy strategies and initiatives for a better internet require a multi-faceted and collaborative approach, addressing technological, regulatory, educational, and societal aspects of online interactions.

LIBERIA GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION (LGGA)

Agatha E. Kofa

The exclusion of women and girls in technology is perpetuated through violence and discrimination. And it is shrinking their futures, and deepening gender economic and social inequalities. Violence in digital spaces are rampant, with women and girls being disproportionately attacked. Digital violence is often sexual in nature, and its consequences frequently spill over into the real world. Yet it is seldom regarded with the gravity it deserves. Digital tools are not created with vulnerable users in mind, and are all too easily weaponized against women.

Almost 60percent of women and girls have experienced gender based violence that was facilitated by the power of technology. Now a day the internet is no more safe , our privacy are no more private. If you have an account thinking that you are safe there is a special group of people that know how to get into your account, and your personal information with out us knowing. We thinking that our information are safe but a very special group of people know it and using your account to blackmail you. This unsafe internet abuse is happening all around us and my anuty is an example cause she been through it. Her account was getting hold of ,and the person started to blackmail her using her information. That was so bad which lead her to depression. So we as girls and young women we are say no to that. We need a inclusive better and safe internet so that we can be free from internet violence

“THE ROLE OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN ADVOCATING FOR AN INCLUSIVE, SAFER, AND BETTER INTERNET.” (LGGA)

DEBORAH T. JAH

The internet can be a better place through young women and girl’s advocacy. The internet allows young women and girls to create online identities and become part of a community to build social networks and communicate with others, which can provide them with support, entertainment, education and information about social movements and human rights issues.

The challenges and opportunities young women face on the internet.

Globally, there has been escalating online violence against girls and young women. They are exposed to explicit messages, pornographic photos, cyberstalking, and other forms of internet abuse. The Internet is not an inherently dangerous place. Actually, browsing the internet can be a great way to make new friends, express your creativity, and learn new skills.

However, there are still corners of the Internet that can be dangerous to girls if they do not use them correctly. Certain websites, including social networking sites, forums, chat rooms, and blogs, can compromise your privacy and make you the target of cyberbullying. Some internet sites are rapidly evolving and rely on social interaction between visitors from all over the world. The good news is, you can avoid dangerous situations with a little preparation. Some Challenges young women face on the internet are:

Invasion of privacy: Young women are more likely to post their cell phone numbers. If you choose to make your Facebook remains public, it is important to stop posting personal details.

Cyber bullying: Cyber bullying is the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature. Cyber bullying can take many different forms, and it is a problem for many young women and girls. Yet it continues to occur all over the internet.

Impersonation: Impersonation is a more extreme example of invasion of privacy. Impersonation cannot only happen on television or in the movies, but it is actually a very real concern for teens using the internet. If the impersonation is taking place on Facebook or Twitter, then the Report tool is a best option since both sites view impersonation as a type of harassment.

Your personal experiences, the social-cultural and legal context of internet safety in your countries, stories, or examples that illustrate your thoughts.

As a young Liberian girl, I have faced abuse and challenges on the internet.

When I first started using the internet, I was encountered by scammers, and some predators. For example, random people started sending messages asking me to send my account passwords, and my account was hacked numerous times because I was not educated on how to change my passwords regularly to protect my various accounts, and little did I know that hackers and scammers do exist.

Moreover, some older men started placing video calls on Facebook and telling me to undress myself knowing fully well I was a teenager. I ended their calls immediately and told my mom about the occurrence. One of the good things I did was to report online abuse to my parents, and because of that, I was educated and safe from many forms of online abuse.

According to a 2021 report by the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), Liberia faces several challenges with respect to internet safety and freedom. Most especially affordability, access, and privacy. There were also recommendations made to the government and other stakeholders to increase public awareness and respect for online safety.

Role's girls and women can play in promoting online safety through advocacy

Girls and young women are sick of being harassed and in some cases driven away from all the opportunities that, in a better world, the internet provides. There are many roles young women and girls can play to protect themselves on the internet. Girls and young women can advocate, campaign for change, force governments and technology companies to put protection in place.

As a result, they can make the internet a better place for not only young women and girls alone but for other young men and boys globally.

Some Advocacy strategies and initiatives I believe can make the internet a better place.

Young women can advocate to diminish and avoid online abuse.

Young women can campaign digitally to have a huge audience in educating others about internet abuse.

Young girls and women can negotiate with the government, NGO's, technology companies, and other stakeholders to increase public awareness globally to make the internet a better place for every.

“THE ROLE OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN ADVOCATING FOR AN INCLUSIVE, SAFER, AND BETTER INTERNET.” (LGGA)

Annoited Bedell

It has to start with each one teach one and by that method girls and young women can carry out on how to make the internet a better place for us all . We need to speak up and raise our voices for women right and gender equality by breaking down barriers and in achieving this requires women empowerment to ensure that decision making at private and public level, so that others can be in that notion of what is happening.

1. What are challenges and opportunities young women face on the internet.

> Young women face a range of challenges and opportunities on the the internet, while the internet provides a platform for communication, education and empowerment, it also exposes them to various risks and biases. Here are some key challenges and opportunities young women encounter on the internet.

* Online harassment and cyberbullying: Young women are often subject to online harassment, including cyberbullying, stalking and their mental health, self-esteem and overall well being.

* Gender- based discrimination: Women and girls frequently face sexism and misogyny online. They may encounter gender-based discrimination ,hate speech, objectification, and stereotypes. These biases can limit their participation in online spaces and discourage them from expressing their opinions.

* Privacy and Security risks: Young women need to be cautious about protecting their personal information, as they are more likely to be targeted by scam, identify theft, and online predators. Privacy settings, secure password and responsible sharing of personal information are essential to mitigate these risks.

* Lack of representation and role models: The internet can perpetuate gender inequalities by underrepresenting women and in various fields such as , tech, science, and leadership positions. This lack of representation can limit young women aspirations and opportunities for growth.

* Access to education and knowledge: The internet offers young women unprecedented access to educational resources ,online courses and information on the various subjects. It can serve as a tool for self learning skill development and empowerment.

*Networking and career opportunities: online platform enable young women to connect, collaborate, and network with individuals globally. They can access mentorship, job opportunities, and entrepreneurial venture,empowering them to pursue their career goals.

*Creative expression and content creation: The internet allows young women to showcase their talents, creativity and perspectives through various mediums such as blogging, viogging, podcasting, and social media. It provides a space for self expression, creativity and building supportive communities.

To address these challenges and maximize the opportunities, it is crucial to promote digital literacy, online safety, and inclusive online spaces. Encouraging positive online behavior, fostering diverse representation, and empowering young women to navigate the digital world effectively are essential stops toward creating a more inclusive and equitable internet for all .

2. Your personal experiences, social culture and legal content of internet safety in your countries stories or examples that illustrate your through.

* I have experience that things has been wildly spread without the notion of an individual.

3. What roles can girls and women play in promoting online safety through advocacy.

>Few roles that girls and women should play in promoting online safety through advocacy includes.

* Design gender- responsive digital polices: A call for policymakers in the digital field to play attention to the unique needs of women and girls, valuing their perspectives and experiences and intentionally considering them when designing, implementing and measuring programmes and policies.

* Promote access to technology and skills: Lack of access to technology was identify as one if the major challenges for women to fully benefit from the digital transformation, increasing connectivity in remote areas, building public digital centers and making technology and internet services more affordable were among the measure proposed to fix this issue.

* Challenges gender preconceptions and cultural norms: Dispelling gender stereotypes and cultural norms that hold girls back is critical in ensuring inclusivity and safety in the digital space ,awareness- raising and close family support could make a difference in bridging the digital gender gap.

* Fight cyberviolence against women and girls : Online violence effects women and girls disproportionately, causing psychological harm and deterring them from participating in digital space. in response, several good practices to protect the right of women and girls were identified, including online harassment reporting mechanism, abuse policies moderation tools and content takedowns procedures.

* Bring more women and girls into the technology sector: A strong emphasis was given to the importance of bringing more women into technology sector and as a first step encouraging them to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Organizations must attempt to improve the culture and policies of the technology sector to make it more inviting and inclusive of women. Advocating for diversity in the work place, supporting policies that encourage work life balance and tackling concerns such as wage parity and discrimination.

4. Think of the advocacy strategies and initiatives you believe can make the internet a better place for everyone. Remember the advocacy session where we talked about forms of advocacy: lobbying, campaigning, creating alliances, negotiations, digital campaigning, etc.

>My advocacy strategies in making the internet a better place for everyone are to negotiate and lobby.

“EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN ABOUT THE INTERNET THROUGH ADVOCACY” (LGGA)

Vannel Nyaneor

The use of internet is very important for easier and quicker communication, educational and entertainment purposes. Many young people in Liberia are engage with Facebook social media platform. Few are engage with WhatsApp and Instagram. Others use yahoo and Gmail. Young people spend more time on social media platforms than older people.

While the internet has such great opportunities, girls and young women also experience challenges in different forms. Cyber bullying, internet fraud or scam and blackmail are some of the challenges girls and young women faced. The danger of internet is that as soon as an information is posted on social media, it goes worldwide within seconds. Most viewers of ugly posts are eager to quickly react by either liking it or making comment. Ugly posts are quickly downloaded, saved or shared by viewers. Girls and young women are intimidated and heartbroken by these actions.

Girls and young women continue to experience the misuse of internet. I am not aware of any laws that prohibit such actions in Liberia. As a girl, I have not personally experienced any internet fraud, but have at times get bullied. Some of my friends do bully me on the internet due to my short height.

I noticed an incident on the media that lasted for months where a guy and his friends constantly bullied a girl because of her level of education. For the past months the guy continued to make the internet a living hell for that girl and it made her to lose her self-value. The whole media started it as a fun until the girl blocked most of them thinking it was going to end; but the others kept it ongoing for the longest and she didn't even know what to do. She was so traumatized and embarrassed at the same time. The girl was slowly losing her mental senses and had to play strong about being fine.

After some time, an online blog page was created and people willingly leaked their friends' secrets to them. They kept posting about people and mentioning them so they can see it. This didn't go well with some young people because they were devastated seeing personal things about them going viral. They couldn't speak up but let it be until one day a guy sent information about this same girl to the bloggers saying how he had sex with her and she was all crying like a baby and in fact he didn't regret doing it.

This girl got so embarrassed that she was forced to explain herself to the public. She said that the guy forcibly had sex with her which was painful and that was what made her cry, but she wanted to take him to jail. Some people pleaded on his behalf and she let it be. She told them that the action of this boy to bring it to the public to disgrace her was totally unacceptable. The girl said she has been bullied for too long which has cost her not to have value in herself. She stressed that at that particular moment she was going to stand up for herself so that people won't take advantage of her. The guy was forced to deactivate his social media account.

Girls and young women have pivotal roles to play in promoting online safety through advocacy. We will use both print and electronic media for the advocacy work. We can develop safety messages and tik tok for girls and young women and post them online. We will also develop and air jingles on the radio and participate in talk-shows to discuss the opportunities and challenges girls faced on the internet. Focus group discussions with young people will be held to discuss this issue and find solutions. Girls and young women rights need to be upheld and protected at all times.

The need to protect girls and young women rights cannot be overemphasized. Girls and young women need a safe environment to live happily; and this requires the collective efforts of everyone. Misuse of the internet must not create an unsafe place for girls. Rather, the internet must be a better place for young people to feel happy. As a surf smart, I intend to address this by applying different advocacy strategies and initiatives so as to create a safe environment for girls and young women. Young people need to enjoy the beauty of the internet. This can be achieved by campaigning in communities, creating alliances with individuals that have similar ideas and objectives. I will work closely with the Liberia Girl Guides Association (LGGA) in carrying out the advocacy campaign. LGGA has a vast experience in advocacy and will play a key role in the campaign.

“THE ROLE OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN ADVOCATING FOR AN INCLUSIVE, SAFER, AND BETTER INTERNET.” (LGGA)

Pinky Ben

Females nowadays may feel like they don't belong in tech or that their aspirations are unrealistic about the internet. Moreover, female mentors can provide valuable insights and advice to help women navigate the challenges of working in tech. Women in media are individuals who participate in media. Media are the collective communication outlets or tools used to store and deliver information or data. The role of women in media revolves around the four axes of media: media freedom, media pluralism, media independence, and media safety. Women in media face the same difficulties and threats as men, and additionally experience gender inequalities, safety issues, or under-representation. The internet helps common people to communicate to their loved ones, it enables them to learn new skills, nowadays even business can be managed online with the help of the internet. If a person is travelling somewhere, he/she can get the information about his or her destination in advance through the internet. The internet plays a huge role to make a common man's life comfortable.

“THE ROLE OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN ADVOCATING FOR AN INCLUSIVE, SAFER, AND BETTER INTERNET.” (LGGA)

Wubu Davis

Women and girls play an essential role in advocating for safer internet because they are more vulnerable on the internet. Women and girls are exposed to many different types of unsafe internet practices.

- The challenges young women and girls face on the internet are , online bullying , online harassment,trafficking blackmailing etc.
- The opportunities young women and girls face on the internet are most likely to find job and be connected and to have traveling opportunities sending information faster and saving what is on the mind throw picture.

My personal example was as young lady coming up and it was my first time to have access to Facebook so has soon has I started Facebooking a older guy came in my inbox and started having conversations with me going on with the conversation him started to ask me for my phophotosrswas thinking it was normal photo after I sent my picture to him , he laugh and say I am talking about sexy photos or u can do a video of urself naked I never do it to send my pic or video because I was infrom about all these things on Facebook so I call it a life saving information that is how I block him from on my page.

A young girl and women play a important role promoting online safety through Advocacy has a young lady if you adovacte for other women or stand for other women you are standing up for yourself , if a girl advocate for online safety she will be highlighted and many other people will join in the fight because if the internet is not safe for girls them we are not moving forward we need our own digital space where we will be Free from blackmailing and other internet fraud.



WORLD ASSOCIATION
OF GIRL GUIDES
AND GIRL SCOUTS



Some of the Advocacy method or 1) initiatives that can help and I believe it can make the internet more safe are by carrying on an online awareness where in you can choose a day to speak on a topic that is connected in making the internet safe.

2) digital campaigning making people on the internet or in your community know the importance of the digital gap for girls and how to make women and girls safe on the internet.

3) engaging people like chairperson in the district who have influence on the making the internet safe through having a program where people will do drama that showing the message on making the internet safe for women and girls through that process more people will get idea and grasp the concept .

4) to inform women and girls to stop posting personal information on any social media platforms, and any content which is private should be secured with a complex password.

Some of the ways women and girls can stay safe on the internet are to identify the problem , mute them by setting a strong password and disable your location.

After all of these methods I can assure you that the digital world will be very safe for women and girls. We need an equal digital world , we should not be threatened badly on the internet to make our world the better place for all of us.

WHAT ROLES CAN GIRLS AND WOMEN PLAY IN PROMOTING ONLINE SAFETY THROUGH ADVOCACY? (LGGA)

Eva Monger

Young girls and women in Liberia have been sexually abuse and cyber bully on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. Girls and women can play a helpful roles in promoting online safety through advocating for a safety online. These are some roles girls and women can play in promoting online safety through advocacy:

- * Educating young women and girls about technology.
- *Enhancing digital literacy, awareness and sound cybersecurity practices for women in all their diversity.
- * Increased Women's, Girls Participation in Digital Technology.
- * Educating young women and girls about technology, 60 percent of girls and women in Liberia are illiterate about technology, ensuring women and girls privacy and safety when using their services by creating an online culture.
- *Enhancing digital literacy, awareness and sound cybersecurity practices for women in all their diversity, providing an ideals for girls and women to protect their privacy , and social life. Teaching girls to become an expert in technology. And to also do an online video teaching girls about technology, on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and TikTok.
- *Increased Women's, Girls Participation in Digital Technology, in Liberia 4 percent of women and girls are expert when it comes to technology. Girls participating in technology program, becoming a girl in tech, knowing how to protect her privacy and who to talk to on social media.
- *Enhancing digital literacy, awareness and sound cybersecurity practices for women in all their diversity.

Educating and teaching women about technology is the best way to advocate for an online safety for girls and women. I think getting more girls and women in to technology will help women protect themselves from being sexually abuse and cyber bullying.

“THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES YOUNG WOMEN FACE ON THE INTERNET” (GGGA)

KWIZERA FLORENCE

In most countries, women face social inequalities on the internet. Role definition underlies many of the reasons why women do not make ample use of technology. In Southern India, according to Vinitha Johnson a woman's existence is defined as a source of support for her family and the wellbeing of the family unit. Culture, the media and society define the roles of women and they are not generally encouraged to fulfil their individual needs, or pursue self-growth, even in educated families. Similarly, in Ghana, there is strong correlation between an individual's work environment and access to digital resources. “While such access may seem gender neutral at face value, traditional gender roles, institutional structures and economic realities force disproportionate numbers of females into the informal sector where such opportunities for access are limited [1] In this era of rapid technological advancements, it is essential to acknowledge the pivotal role of girls and young women in advocating for an inclusive, safer, and better internet. Girls and young women play a crucial role by advocating on: [Availability, Inclusivity, and safety internet](#) [Ending Discrimination and inequalities on the internet](#) [Engaging in forums, discussions, and campaigns that promote safety online](#) [Ensuring existence of policies that address online gender-based violence.](#) [Building supportive communities of girls and young women who come together to raise awareness and collectively address issues such as online bullying, mental health and inequalities](#) According to H. Leslie Steeves & Janet D. Kwami in the ICT4D, Gender Divides and Development: The Case of Ghana, 2012, the Ministry of Women and Children (MOWAC) has the mandate to promote gender equity and gender mainstreaming policies and is responsible for implementing the so-called national strategy on ICTs and gender as part of the overall national ICT policy. [2]

he MOWAC should include in the national ICT clear definitions of gender inequalities on the internet based on the reality on the ground and different ways of talking them. Therefore, young women should build alliances with organizations that aim to empower women in advocating for the integration of inclusive strategies on gender in the national ICT policy. In order to reduce inequalities in internet access, there is a need for the government to ensure that young women in urban area in general and particularly in rural area overcome internet access barriers by creating a good environment and factors that promote internet access for inclusive development. Stakeholders are also called upon facilitating internet access for all. To achieve that, women need to take action by creating awareness for using internet for social change and advocating for their internet access right. Women could benefit greatly if they were empowered with the information communication technology. The information technology could be an effective tool for the political empowerment of women; education and disseminating information and indigenous knowledge; and strengthening women's participation in the political process [2] It is crucial for girls and young women to recognize the value of their contributions and provide avenues for their continued empowerment, ensuring that their voices and experiences shape the future of the internet.

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“ENCOURAGING A POSITIVE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN” (GGGA)

Blessing Abbey

The role of girls and young women in advocating for inclusive safer and better internet environment.

To start with, I would like to explain what a better internet is. The internet is a vast network that connects computers all over the world. Through the internet, people can share information and communicate from anywhere with an internet connection. Due to this connection, people try to use this opportunity to infringe upon people's rights especially girls and young women. Therefore, there are so many challenges that girls and young women face on the internet. These challenges are as follows: Digital gender_ abused violence and harassment. Most of the young women and girls consulted had experienced some form of targeted and gendered online abuse, including threatening messages, sexual harassment and the sharing of private images without their consent.

Furthermore, I would like to use this opportunity to advocate for a positive online environment for both girls and young women by raising awareness through education. Foster collaboration among stakeholders, including government, law enforcement, Comprehensive approach against the issues. I have seen members of my peer group very upset as a result of bullying and this needs to stop. The government needs to prioritize protecting girls and young women from online harm. Feeling safe online is imperative to the mental health, well-being and self-esteem of the younger generation.

In a nutshell, I chose lobbying as one of the best strategy and initiative, because with direct attempts, We can influence decision makers to work hard with the government to change policies, to encourage a positive online environment for both girls and young women.

“EMPOWERING GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN: ADVOCATING FOR AN INCLUSIVE INTERNET” (GGGA)

Donatella Esinam Kudoto

Introduction:

The digital age has brought numerous advancements and opportunities, enabling people worldwide to connect, share knowledge, and participate in online communities. However, the internet is not yet fully inclusive, with certain groups, including girls and young women, facing significant challenges and barriers. This article aims to explore the role of girls and young women in advocating for an inclusive internet, highlighting their potential as catalysts for change and the steps needed to ensure greater digital equity.

1. Addressing Gender Disparities:

Girls and young women face gender-specific challenges online, such as cyberbullying, harassment, and lack of representation in technology fields. To advocate for an inclusive internet, girls and young women must actively participate in discussions surrounding gender disparities. They can engage in creating safe online spaces, promoting digital literacy programs, and highlighting inspiring female role models in the tech industry. By sharing their experiences and advocating for change, they can shape a more gender-inclusive online environment.

2. Promoting Digital Literacy and Skills:

To break down barriers, girls and young women need access to digital literacy programs and skill-building initiatives. These programs equip them with the necessary knowledge to navigate the online world safely, confidently express themselves, and utilize technology for personal and professional growth. By participating in such programs, they can enhance their digital competence while establishing a foundation for advocating for digital inclusion.

3. Fostering Online Communities:

Girls and young women can leverage the power of social media and online communities to foster a sense of belonging and create safe spaces on the internet. By forming networks and engaging in online discussions, they can raise awareness about the importance of inclusivity and encourage diverse voices to be heard. Sharing stories, experiences, and support within these communities fosters solidarity, strengthens resilience, and amplifies their collective advocacy for an inclusive internet.

4. Engaging in Policy and Decision-Making Processes:

Girls and young women must actively engage in policy and decision-making processes related to digital rights and internet governance. Their voices need to be heard in discussions on data privacy, online security, and digital literacy initiatives. By advocating for policies that address gender disparities and ensure greater inclusivity, they contribute to the creation of a fairer digital landscape.

5. Collaboration and Mentorship:

Collaboration and mentorship between girls and young women are invaluable in advancing the cause of an inclusive internet. By uplifting and supporting each other, they create a powerful network that amplifies their collective voice. Moreover, they can mentor and inspire younger girls to embrace the digital world confidently, fostering an environment where all girls can thrive online.

Conclusion:

Girls and young women play a pivotal role in advocating for an inclusive internet. Their engagement, participation, and leadership are essential in breaking gender barriers, promoting digital literacy, and fostering online spaces that prioritize safety and diversity. With their involvement in policy discussions and determination to create change, girls and young women have the potential to ensure a truly inclusive

GHANA GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION (GGGA)

Eugenia Fiador

Introduction:

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1. Addressing Gender Disparities:

Girls and young women face gender-specific challenges online, such as cyberbullying, harassment, and lack of representation in technology fields. To advocate for an inclusive internet, girls and young women must actively participate in discussions surrounding gender disparities. They can engage in creating safe spaces. *The Modern Woman in the Digital Space: Advocating for an Inclusive Agenda to Promote a Safer Internet for Ladies.*

The rapid growth nature of the internet has transformed our world, affecting the way we communicate, learn, conduct business, and engage with one another. While the internet offers opportunities, it also poses various challenges, particularly safety, inclusivity, and overall quality. In this essay, we will explore the critical role that girls and young women play in advocating for a more inclusive, safer, and better internet.

Girls and young women possess unique perspectives that contribute to shaping an inclusive internet landscape. Historically, the internet has been a male-dominated space. However, this narrative is gradually changing, as girls and young women empower themselves to become agents of change.

They actively engage in initiatives to promote diverse representation and amplify the voices of underrepresented groups. Through activities such as blogging, vlogging, social media activism, and online campaigns, they foster an environment that acknowledges and respects the experiences of all internet users.

Online safety is a pressing concern in today's digital era. Girls and young women in Ghana often face unique risks such as cyberbullying, harassment, online grooming, and revenge porn. Unfortunately, these risks can hinder their participation and limit their ability to benefit fully from internet platforms.

Online spaces, promoting digital literacy programs, and highlighting inspiring female role models in the tech industry. By sharing their experiences and advocating for change, they can shape a more gender-inclusive online environment.

2. Promoting Digital Literacy and Skills:

To break down barriers, girls and young women need access to digital literacy programs and skill-building initiatives. These programs equip them with the necessary knowledge to navigate the online world safely, confidently express themselves, and utilize technology for personal and professional growth. By participating in such programs, they can enhance their digital competence while establishing a foundation for advocating for digital inclusion.

However, girls and young women are at the forefront of advocating for a safer digital environment. They collaborate with various stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, and technology companies and also Non Governmental Organizations like WAGGGS to promote strong measures to combat online threats. They initiate discussions, awareness campaigns, and education programs or Project like Surf smart and She Surfs Freedom that equip individuals with vital digital literacy skills, empower them to recognize and respond to online dangers, and foster a strong sense of online flexibility.

To advocate for digital rights and privacy, girls and young women actively engage in collective efforts to shape legislation and policies that ensure internet platforms respect privacy norms and protect user data. Their involvement in organizations advocating for digital rights and privacy amplifies their voices and influences decision-making processes. Through initiatives such as skill-building workshops, mentorship, digital campaigning and Lobbying.

"EMPOWERING CHANGE: THE ROLE OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN ADVOCATING FOR AN INCLUSIVE, SAFER, AND BETTER INTERNET" (GGGA)

Kanshah Rita

In today's digital age, the internet has become an integral part of our lives. It's a space where information flows freely, and voices can be heard. However, it's not without its challenges, and girls and young women are central to shaping the future of the internet. This essay explores the unique challenges they face, the opportunities they have, and the pivotal roles they can play in advocating for an inclusive, safer, and better internet.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN ON THE INTERNET:

The internet offers countless opportunities for young women. It provides a platform for education, networking, and self-expression. However, these opportunities come hand in hand with challenges that disproportionately affect them. Cyberbullying, online harassment, and gender-based discrimination are pervasive issues. A toxic online environment can deter girls and young women from fully realizing the internet's potential. In my own experiences, and in the broader social-cultural and legal context of internet safety, it's clear that these challenges are not confined to a single region or country. The stories and examples I've encountered underline the importance of addressing these issues. From harmful stereotypes perpetuated on social media to explicit threats, it's evident that girls and young women need a safer digital space.

THE ROLE OF GIRLS AND WOMEN IN PROMOTING ONLINE SAFETY THROUGH ADVOCACY:

Advocacy is a powerful tool to address the challenges faced by girls and young women on the internet. They can play a vital role in fostering online safety and inclusivity through various advocacy strategies:

1. **Lobbying for Legal Changes:** One important aspect of advocacy is pushing for legislative changes that protect the rights and safety of individuals online. Girls and young women can engage in lobbying efforts to persuade lawmakers to pass laws addressing cyberbullying, online harassment, and discrimination.
2. **Campaigning for Awareness:** Creating awareness is key to combating online safety issues. Girls and young women can lead campaigns to educate their peers, parents, and educators about the importance of responsible internet use and the potential consequences of cyberbullying.
3. **Creating Alliances:** Collaboration is essential in advocacy. Girls and young women can form alliances with like-minded organizations and individuals to amplify their voices and push for change collectively.
4. **Negotiating with Online Platforms:** Advocating for improved safety measures on social media platforms and websites is crucial. Young women can engage in discussions with these platforms to encourage the implementation of reporting mechanisms, moderation policies, and stronger responses to harassment and hate speech.
5. **Digital Campaigning:** Harnessing the power of social media and online platforms, girls and young women can initiate digital campaigns to raise awareness, share stories, and push for change. These campaigns can go viral, making a significant impact. The experiences of girls and young women are invaluable, as they provide unique insights into the challenges they face on the internet. By sharing their stories and advocating for change, they can drive meaningful progress towards a safer and more inclusive internet.

In conclusion, girls and young women have a vital role to play in advocating for an inclusive, safer, and better internet. The challenges they face must not deter them but instead inspire them to lead the charge for change. Through lobbying, campaigning, alliances, negotiations, and digital campaigning, they can make a substantial impact. In a world that is increasingly interconnected through the internet, the active involvement of girls and young women in shaping its future is not just important but necessary. It's time for a digital landscape where all individuals, regardless of gender, can freely and safely express themselves, learn, and connect with others.

GHANA GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION (GGGA)

Angel Jonas

In today's digital age, the internet has become an integral part of our lives, providing us with endless opportunities for learning, communication, and self-expression. However, it is also a space where various challenges arise, particularly for girls and young women. From cyberbullying and online harassment to gender-based violence and exclusion, girls and young women face unique risks and barriers online. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize their role in advocating for an inclusive, safer, and better internet.

One of the primary roles girls and young women can play in advocating for a better internet is by raising awareness about the challenges they face. By sharing their personal experiences, they can shed light on the issues that often go unnoticed or are dismissed. This can help create a sense of urgency among policymakers, educators, and the wider society to address these concerns seriously.

Moreover, girls and young women can actively participate in discussions on internet governance and policy-making. Their voices should be heard when decisions are being made that directly impact their online experiences. They can join organizations and initiatives dedicated to promoting digital rights and work alongside experts to develop policies that prioritize inclusivity, safety, and equality for all internet users.

Furthermore, girls and young women can contribute to building a safer internet by becoming advocates against cyberbullying and online harassment. They can raise awareness about the consequences of such behaviors and promote empathy and respect online. By organizing campaigns and workshops in schools and communities, they can educate their peers about responsible digital citizenship and encourage positive online interactions.

Additionally, girls and young women can play a crucial role in challenging gender stereotypes and promoting inclusivity online. They can actively engage in discussions about gender equality and representation, ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented in online spaces. By encouraging media literacy and critical thinking, they can help debunk harmful stereotypes perpetuated by the media and promote a more inclusive and diverse internet culture.

Girls and young women can also contribute to making the internet a better place by actively participating in STEM fields. Encouraging girls to pursue careers in technology and computer science can help bridge the gender gap in these industries. By becoming creators, innovators, and leaders in the digital world, they can influence the development of technologies that are inclusive, ethical, and respectful of users' rights.

In order to effectively advocate for an inclusive, safer, and better internet, girls and young women need support from various stakeholders. Governments should prioritize digital literacy programs that equip girls with the necessary skills to navigate the online world safely. Educational institutions should incorporate digital citizenship and online safety into their curricula, empowering girls to become responsible digital citizens.

Furthermore, parents and guardians should engage in open conversations with their children about their online experiences, providing guidance and support. Media organizations and content creators should strive for gender equality and representation in their productions, challenging harmful stereotypes and promoting positive role models for girls and young women.

“CREATING A SAFE AND WELCOMING INTERNET SPACE” (GGGA)

Fedalia Davida Lawson

The word internet means different things to different people. The evolution of the internet from an almost impossible idea to a common accessible tool over the years has been met with as much scepticism as enthusiasm. In junior high school I remember writing argumentative essays almost every year for or against topics such as ‘ the internet has done more harm than good to our society ‘ , I would change sides from essay to essay choosing either the affirmative or negative stance. The internet can be as much a safe haven as it can be a nightmare especially for girls and young girls in our communities. The perks of the internet are extensive ranging from allowing easy access to academic material, aiding businesses to efficiently market their services to reaching millions around the world with societal issues and information that they would not have been privy to. These benefits are unfortunately overlooked when on the opposite spectrum of the use of the internet people take advantage of the anonymity it provides to spread hate, hurt, insult and mistreat others.

As a young woman desperate to change the world she finds herself in, I consider it a personal duty to shed light on issues that would rather be ignored. I love my country, the people and it's rich culture but I have noticed a rather subtle culture of apathy on the internet in which people especially young people say disrespectful and inappropriate things writing them off as jokes oblivious to the effects on other people , unfortunately this issue is not exclusive to Ghana. Young people from all around the world experience and engage in similar activities. According to the Forbes article ‘ When Harassment Of Women Moves Online ‘ 38% of women on the internet have experienced online harassment . This statistic is disheartening because young women and girls are being robbed of their freedom to explore the vast opportunities the internet presents for fear of online hate and violence . A number of young people develop a myriad of mental health issues due to bad experiences online causing problems ranging from body dysmorphia to suicidal instincts.

As young girls we stand at the forefront of this fight for a safe internet space since many of our sisters worldwide are affected adversely by inconducive internet environments. Growing up I would always hear people say 'be the change you want to see' and I quickly realised that the use of my voice was my first step in my insistence for change. One way to contribute to the fight for a safe internet surfing experience is taking advantage of the reporting feature on most social media platforms to inform the platforms of unacceptable activity. The internet also presents a good opportunity for digital campaigns against all forms of behaviour that go against good internet etiquette. To ensure a long lasting solution to make the internet a better place we can build alliances with individuals as well as institutions to push for policies and laws that set out clear repercussions for people who create toxic internet spaces.

We owe it to ourselves to leave the world a better place than we met it and I believe one way to do it is through seeking to give the next young woman a better experience than I had while surfing the internet. I consider myself very lucky to be a change maker through the surf smart advocacy program that World Association Of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts is pioneering and I hope to see major steps being taken to make the internet safer in the near future.

EMPOWERING GIRLS IN THE DIGITAL AGE: ADVOCATING FOR AN INCLUSIVE, SAFER, AND BETTER INTERNET (GGGA)

Christabel Amoanimaa

In today's digital age, the internet has become an integral part of our lives, revolutionizing our modes of communication, learning, and interaction with the world. Nevertheless, alongside its extensive accessibility, the internet also presents a variety of difficulties and hazards, particularly for girls and young women. These challenges encompass cyberbullying, online harassment, privacy breaches, and exposure to harmful content. It is imperative to acknowledge and empower the role of girls and young women in championing an internet that is more inclusive, secure, and improved to address these issues.

Girls confront a spectrum of challenges and possibilities in the online sphere. While the digital era has ushered in significant progress and advantages, it has also ushered in a range of issues that disproportionately impact girls. Recognizing these challenges is crucial to effectively confronting them and constructing a safer and more inclusive digital environment for girls.

A pivotal challenge that girls face on the internet is the prevalence of online harassment and cyberbullying. Studies indicate that girls are more likely to encounter harassment and abuse online compared to boys. This can manifest in various forms, such as receiving offensive or menacing messages, being subjected to hate speech or derogatory comments, or having personal information divulged without consent. Online harassment can lead to severe emotional and psychological repercussions for girls, resulting in diminished self-worth, heightened anxiety, depression, and even contemplation of self-harm.

Another challenge revolves around the perpetuation of detrimental gender stereotypes and the objectification of girls in the online realm. The internet can serve as a platform where harmful narratives about gender roles and expectations are perpetuated. Girls may come across content that promotes unrealistic beauty ideals, objectifies their bodies, or portrays them in a limited and stereotypical manner. This can adversely affect their self-perception, body confidence, aspirations, and contribute to the continuation of gender inequity.

Concerns regarding privacy and security also loom large for girls on the internet. With the growing prevalence of social media platforms and online communication tools, girls may unwittingly disclose personal information that can be exploited by malicious individuals. This includes sharing location data, photos, or other sensitive details that can jeopardize their safety. Furthermore, there is mounting apprehension about the non-consensual dissemination of intimate images (commonly referred to as "revenge porn"), which disproportionately impacts girls and can have devastating repercussions for their reputation and mental well-being.

Despite these challenges, the internet also offers myriad opportunities for girls. The digital realm grants access to extensive troves of information and educational resources that can enable girls to acquire new skills, pursue their interests, and broaden their horizons. Online platforms can function as spaces for girls to articulate themselves, connect with kindred spirits, and discover support networks. The internet also presents avenues for girls to engage in activism and advocacy, raising consciousness about issues that affect them and instigating positive transformations.

To tackle the challenges and maximize the opportunities for girls on the internet, a range of stakeholders must take action. Governments should enact laws safeguarding individuals from online harassment and cyberbullying, while also promoting programs in digital literacy and education that empower girls to navigate the online world securely. Internet service providers and social media platforms bear the responsibility of enforcing community guidelines and policies that prohibit hate speech, harassment, and the dissemination of non-consensual intimate images. Parents and educators hold a pivotal role in instructing girls about online safety, privacy, and responsible internet use.

In conclusion, girls encounter both trials and prospects on the internet. Online harassment, gender stereotypes, objectification, privacy concerns, and security risks constitute some of the paramount challenges that disproportionately affect girls. However, the internet also furnishes avenues for learning, self-expression, connection, and activism. By addressing these challenges and nurturing a secure and inclusive online environment, we can ensure that girls can fully avail themselves of the opportunities presented by the digital age.

CYBER S.H.E.R.O.E.S.: GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN LEADING THE CHARGE FOR A SAFER INTERNET (GGGA)

Michelle Bizra

The birth of the internet was a monumental achievement, a testament to the boundless capabilities of humanity and our unwavering pursuit of unity. It has completely transformed the way we access and engage with information on a global scale. In today's interconnected world, prioritizing internet safety is not a mere option, but an absolute necessity. Just as we secure our physical surroundings, we must also safeguard the digital realm, which serves as a gateway to knowledge, communication, and endless opportunities. However, in this era of digital jurisdiction, we find ourselves grappling with the coexistence of cyber threats and the rampant spread of false information. Privacy, once a pillar of online life, now relies heavily on firewalls and encryption. Online harassment and content manipulation present formidable obstacles to the pursuit of truth. We stand at a pivotal moment where collective action is imperative to protect and fortify the digital space for future generations.

Alarming statistics from UNICEF reveal that nearly one in three internet users under the age of 18 have fallen victim to online bullying, with girls bearing the brunt of this injustice. As they navigate the digital landscape, girls and young women encounter cyberbullying and gender biases. Nevertheless, they exhibit remarkable resilience, shattering barriers with every keystroke and transforming the virtual world into a platform for empowerment, education, and self-expression.

In the vibrant landscape of Ghana, girls and young women are harnessing the immense potential of the internet. They are fearlessly sharing stories of empowerment through online entrepreneurship and education, challenging deeply ingrained societal norms. However, they also confront the unfortunate reality of cyberbullying and harassment, reflecting the broader challenges faced by our society.

The cultural context, which places great emphasis on respect and modesty, sometimes clashes with the freedom of expression offered by the internet. While legal frameworks are evolving, concerns persist regarding their effective enforcement.

Despite the challenges posed by the digital realm, there are promising indications of progress. The enactment of the Cybersecurity Act represents a significant step forward, demonstrating a commitment to addressing these concerns. Organizations such as Tech Needs Girls Ghana are spearheading initiatives to equip young women with digital skills, thereby fostering a safer online environment. Through their experiences, a narrative of resilience and advancement emerges, underscoring the pivotal role of girls and young women in creating a secure internet for all.

In light of the escalating incidence of cyberbullying and online harassment, particularly affecting girls, it is imperative that girls and women become formidable advocates for online safety. This necessitates embarking on a journey of advocacy, which can be achieved by establishing online forums and support groups that provide victims with solace and strength through solidarity. Advocates can also engage with local schools, educating students on online safety and digital etiquette, while persuading parents to be more vigilant about their children's online activities.

Moreover, it is crucial that these advocacy efforts extend to local authorities, urging for the implementation of more stringent cyberbullying laws and policies. Girls and young women can also contribute to a safe digital space by forming a robust and collaborative advocacy network, which will enable them to leverage their collective strengths to effectively influence policymakers and technology companies, encouraging them to take concrete actions to ensure online safety. Additionally, through the organization of workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns, they can amplify their unified call for change.

When young women make the decision to exert their unwavering efforts, they not only achieve success in advocating for stronger legal protections, but also serve as a source of inspiration for technology companies to enhance their moderation and reporting mechanisms. Consequently, they emerge as a driving force in promoting digital literacy and encouraging safe online behavior, thereby reshaping the digital landscape into a more secure and inclusive space.

Through a multifaceted approach to advocacy, the internet will gradually evolve into a safer haven. These various approaches collectively demonstrate the power of unified action, affirming that a united front can indeed contribute to the improvement of the internet for the benefit of all users.

In the symphony of progress, the voices of girls and young women resonate as potent catalysts for positive change within the digital realm. Their advocacy efforts pave the way for an inclusive, safer, and ultimately superior internet. With unwavering determination, they dismantle barriers and forge a path towards a virtual realm that embraces diversity, rejects discrimination, and safeguards the well-being of all individuals. As torchbearers of a brighter digital future, their influence knows no bounds. Together, they stand as a testament to the transformative power of advocacy, reminding us that a truly inclusive internet is not merely an aspiration, but an attainable reality through the unwavering dedication of these exceptional individuals.

THE ROLE OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN ADVOCATING FOR AN INCLUSIVE, SAFER, AND BETTER INTERNET (GGGA)

Nalumu Christa

Girls and young women play a crucial role in advocating for an inclusive, safer, and better internet. Here are some clear points to consider in how young women can play a role

- **Empowering Voices:**

Girls and young women have unique perspectives and experiences that deserve to be heard. By actively participating in online discussions, they can bring attention to important issues and contribute to shaping a more inclusive and diverse online space. In this area an association can ensure to provide a supportive environment and listen actively validate their thoughts and feelings and give them a space to share their ideas

- **Raising Awareness:**

Girls and young women can raise awareness about online safety and digital literacy. By sharing their knowledge and experiences, they can help educate others and promote responsible online behavior, ultimately creating a safer environment for everyone. This can also be done by using relevant hashtags and information and while we remain respectful and keeping it safe online

- **Challenging Stereotypes:**

Through their online presence, girls and young women can challenge stereotypes and break down barriers. By showcasing their talents, achievements, and diverse interests, they can inspire others and promote a more inclusive and positive online culture. We can break this by sharing a diverse and inclusive content online doing this we can create a more inclusive and accepting online community

- **Combating Cyberbullying:**

Girls and young women can take a stand against cyberbullying and harassment. By promoting kindness, empathy, and respect, they can create a supportive online community and encourage others to do the same. As a young woman I can do this by educating others and promoting inclusivity and sharing more perspectives and work together to end harmful stereotypes.

- **Advocating for Digital Literacy:**

Girls and young women can actively participate in digital literacy programs and initiatives. By acquiring skills and knowledge, they can empower themselves and others to navigate the online world safely and confidently. With their unique perspectives, voices, and actions, girls and young women have the power to make a significant impact in creating an inclusive, safer, and better internet for all. Together, we can build a digital landscape that celebrates diversity, fosters respect, and promotes positive engagement.

- **Collaboration and Networking:**

By collaborating with like-minded individuals and organizations, girls and young women can create powerful networks that work together to advocate for positive change in the online sphere. This point is one of the major points this is by connecting with like-minded organizations and individuals through social media platforms by engaging in discussions and share ideas on how to be safe online

- **Leading by Example:**

Girls and young women can lead by example, demonstrating responsible online behavior, promoting healthy digital habits, and inspiring others to do the same. As a girl guide I can lead by example by practicing safety online such as being respectful and kind and inclusive in my interactions and by showing young women how to use social media and the internet in a positive and constructive way

- **Encouraging Positive Role Models:**

Through their online presence, girls and young women can showcase positive role models who challenge stereotypes and inspire others to embrace diversity and inclusivity. This too can be done by highlighting celebrities and influential people who promote inclusivity and also inspire others. Sharing stories and achievements so that they can motivate them to work hard and guide their footsteps as well

- **Advocating for Safer Online Spaces:**

Girls and young women can advocate for stronger measures to combat online harassment, ensuring that everyone feels safe and protected while using the internet. 6. Collaboration and Networking: By collaborating This can be done by raising online safety and also creating awareness about cyberbullying and harassment and by encouraging young women to create passwords for their online accounts

To sum it up girls and young women have a significant role in advocating for an inclusive, safer, and better internet. They can raise awareness about online safety, promote positive digital citizenship, and challenge harmful stereotypes. By empowering girls and young women to use their voices and talents, we can create a more inclusive and diverse online space for all. Together we can make the internet a safe space.

In conclusion, girls and young women play a crucial role in advocating for an inclusive, safer, and better internet. By raising awareness, participating in policy-making, combating cyberbullying, challenging gender stereotypes, and engaging in STEM fields, they can contribute to creating a digital world that is respectful, empowering, and equal for all. It is essential that we recognize their expertise, amplify their voices, and provide them with the necessary support to shape the future of the internet.