




WHY DOES THIS RESEARCH MATTER?



The study is available at the link in the bio.

FACTSHEET #1



We believe social media holds the power to challenge and reshape young people's views on gender and violence. As a team of feminist activists, researchers, and experts from 4 countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain), we set out to understand how social media impacts perceptions of gender-based violence and reinforces sexist stereotypes, with the goal of creating a more just and equitable digital world.



- Gender stereotypes are beliefs about how *boys and girls should act based on their gender*. They limit what people can do, especially harming women by keeping power imbalances in place. These ideas come from society and affect how we view ourselves and others.
- Gender norms are *rules about what's "acceptable" for males and females*, and they can change across cultures but still impact everyone's opportunities and choices.

EIGE (2022) names 8 types of cyber violence against women & girls (CVAWG):

cyber stalking

When someone repeatedly tracks or harasses you online, making you feel unsafe.

cyber harassment & bullying

When someone repeatedly attacks or humiliates you online.

online hate speech

When someone spreads violent or sexist messages targeting you.

revenge porn

When someone shares your private photos or videos without consent.

IoT-facilitated violence

When someone hacks your smart devices to harass or control you.

doxing

When someone shares your private details online, putting you at risk.

grooming

When an adult manipulates you into sharing explicit content.

trolling

When people deliberately insult or provoke you online.



Is SoMe a tool for change or harm?

- **The good:** Social media can be a platform for empowerment. It can give young people the power to question gender norms, promote equality, and speak up against violence.
- **The bad:** But it can also normalize harmful behavior like misogyny, toxic masculinity and victim-blaming, making it harder to challenge deeply ingrained patriarchal structures.

Data shows:

- 96% of young people in the EU use the internet daily.
- 85% of women who are active online have witnessed some form of online violence and 38% of women have been personally targeted by online violence.
- 45% of Gen Z & Millennials are especially vulnerable to cyber violence—a major concern in today's digital world.
- 1 in 4 women report online violence to the platform where it occurred and just 14% contact offline authorities when faced with online harm.





WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE:

- We need **more influencers to speak out** on harassment, body shaming, and online abuse. They can help challenge harmful stereotypes and create positive change.
- Schools must **teach students how to recognise and challenge gender stereotypes and GBV**
- Online platforms must make it easier for us **to report abuse and block harmful content or accounts**
- Policymakers need to **develop and enforce rules that address online violence and discrimination**
- We need **accessible resources and support for those experiencing online abuse, especially gender-based violence, so that they don't feel alone.**



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