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fast facts

Project: Promoting Women's Rights and Safety Online: Addressing Electronic Violence Against Women (eVAW) in the Philippines
Lead Organization: Foundation for Media Alternatives
Country: Philippines
Budget: 29,665.00 AUD

situation

Given the rise in ICT use, the incidence of electronic violence against women (eVAW) is also increasing. Traditional forms of gender violence involve digital/electronic components, and many women complain about cyber/mobile stalking, online/mobile sexual harassment, digital surveillance, and the unauthorized use and manipulation of personal information including images and videos. A major concern is that women and girls who are victimized do not know how to report, stop and prosecute these offenses.

solution

Since 2009, the Foundation for Media Alternatives, or FMA, has focused on strengthening the capacity of women's rights activists and organizations to use technology in their work to end violence against women (VAW). At the same time, with the growing rates of eVAW, it is critical to also create effective policies that protect the rights of individuals who have experienced eVAW. While initial data demonstrate that women are experiencing new kinds of violations in digital and electronic spaces, there is no concerted data collection and analysis to track this phenomenon. There is a need to provide meaningful and actionable data to support advocacy for effective legal remedies and policies that can address technology-related violence.

FMA has worked extensively in ICT policy in the Philippines, and has identified policy gaps in current laws and regulations, as well as the few legal instruments that aim to combat eVAW. While there are existing laws on VAW and Children, as well as a relatively new Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act, online privacy, safety and access to information and freedom of expression for women and girls is still not adequately protected. FMA, the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) have collaborated to recognize eVAW as a form of cybercrime. The PNP Cybercrime Unit operating in Manila reports that 70% of complaints it receives involves complaints about abusive behavior experienced by women and girls. However, policy responses are sporadic across organizations and districts. FMA has developed a system that allows for eVAW reporting, data analysis and awareness-raising, to be jointly conducted and supported by the Philippine government and civil society. Using basic ICT (such as cell phones), eVAW data will be aggregated, mapped, and analyzed to generate evidence-based knowledge for policy recommendations and response, strategic capacity-building, and justice for victims of eVAW.

The overarching goals of this project are:

- *To create a greater awareness of eVAW and the tools available for documenting eVAW*
- *To use technology, especially social media, to aggregate and analyze national data on eVAW and highlight where and when eVAW violations are happening*
- *To involve stakeholders in identifying current laws – and creating new polices – to protect women's rights including their safety and security, via an eVAW Policy Agenda/Roadmap*
- *To build the capabilities of government and non-government stakeholders to address*

incidents of eVAW strategically and in a coordinated manner, and improve access to justice for those who have been victims of eVAW

- *To generate public information and awareness of eVAW through strategic communication, information dissemination, and public engagement activities*
- *To sustain and grow networks of concerned stakeholders to build a strong constituency for addressing eVAW through utilizing new technologies and promoting women's rights*

There are a variety of activities that FMA is coordinating to reach these goals. The first of these was introduced in August 2013 when FMA introduced a customized SMS data-gathering tool and mapping platform using the Ushahidi eVAW mapping tool it had used in a previous campaign with the Association for Progressive Communications. Ushahidi is an open-source tool that allows users to post real-time events on a map in order to drive attention to events at a particular location. With the introduction of the platform, FMA can begin to conduct trend analysis and data visualization with the goal of presenting data to law enforcement and policy bodies. FMA has also created manuals for using Ushahidi to collect eVAW information, as well as conducted training on the use of the online tool.

Project training efforts have targeted the vast community of project stakeholders. The primary target communities and beneficiaries of the project include girls and women (particularly victims of eVAW), women's' rights and gender-based organizations already concerned with eVAW, and other civil society organizations or CSOs involved in general human rights advocacies that intersect with eVAW. Other stakeholders include government agencies who are involved with gender concerns (such as the Philippine Commission on Women and the Department of Social Welfare and Development), national and regional law enforcement agencies, and all levels of academic institutions, especially girls' schools, where vulnerable students can learn about eVAW.

The eVAW primer has been disseminated at several workshops, related forums, and is available online. FMA has also been featured on radio and television programs to build awareness of both eVAW and the FMA eVAW tool.

Anti-eVaw materials from 1 Billion Rising event, 2013

Outcomes

- Held 16 trainings and eVAW orientations for over 1000 people
- Disseminated over 2000 eVAW primers
- Authored Domestic Legal Remedy for eVAW

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Train the trainers – Secure Online Communications, 2013