

# LP DIGITAL HELPLINE REPORT

JANUARY - MARCH 2023

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## 1. Introduction

Owing to advancements in technology, more people are using digital devices, such as smartphones, which has led to several digital platforms and a large user base without any background in digital rights and safety.

Because of increased internet use, the expansion of social media, and the shifting of possibilities to digital platforms, the number of people who use digital platforms has increased.

Digital rights include the right to use the internet, the right to stay online, the right to work, the right to own property, and the right to access information on digital devices.

The Launch Pad Tanzania has been running several programs on digital rights, digital literacy, digital safety and security, and digital skills for women and youth in a variety of professions.

As a result of these developments, LP Digital, The Launchpad Tanzania's digital arm, launched a helpline number in January 2022, which would be used by anyone who had encountered any online gender-based violence (OGBV), such as social media harassment, cyberbullying, revenge porn, and the non-consensual distribution of intimate images (NCSII), among other things.

In conjunction with the launch of a new project titled "Promoting and Protecting Youth and Women's Voices ONLINE," The helpline is intended to assist young people and women in taking the first step toward reporting online violence and seeking assistance with mental health issues caused by online violence.

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## **2. OBJECTIVES**

The helpline number was established to achieve the following objectives:

- To assist those who have been victims of online Gender-Based Violence.
- To increase awareness and understanding of Cybercrime, Cybercrime Law, Online Gender-Based Violence, and Online Violence Against Women.
- To provide frontline support services, including psychological aid, legal aid, and support groups as needed.
- To help anyone who uses social media platforms understand how to use them properly.
- To aid in understanding the impact of Cybercrime, Digital Rights, OGBV, or OVAW, including self-harm threats.
- To ensure the collection, collation, interpretation, and distribution of accurate data so that helpline activities can be analyzed and interpreted for reporting and to provide the foundation for future service improvement.

## **3. SCOPE**

The global expansion of digital media has provided women with previously unheard-of opportunities. However, digital barriers, such as cyber abuse against women, have proven to be impediments to increasing digital participation for girls and women. Many of them choose to engage in self-censorship rather than participate in contentious online discussions.

As a result, anyone who uses social media platforms is vulnerable to cyberbullying or online violence. This helpline number is not restricted by geography, gender, or age.

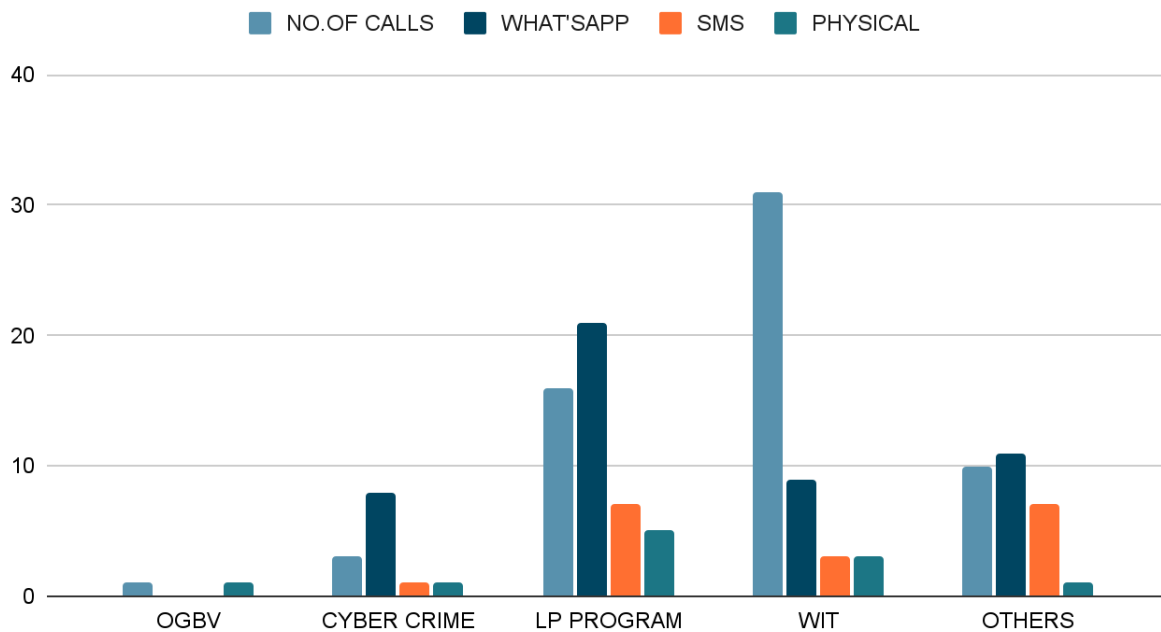
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The helpline number was posted on all of our social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), and based on the overwhelming response, it appears that it was seen by everyone we wanted to contact.

We received numerous calls inquiring about our work and Lp digital initiatives, as well as calls inquiring about our events and activities.

In addition to violence, LP Digital followers on various social media platforms wanted to know more about the helpline number and what is meant by the phrase "online gender."

## RESPONSE FROM SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



The response graph depicts the various channels that social media users use to contact us.

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## **4. CASES**

### **4.1. CYBER CRIME.**

The majority of reported cases of cybercrime involve scams, such as employee fraud, malware, loan-related scams, and fake social media accounts. Scammers who prey on people in need of quick money are also common.

No cybercrime incidents were reported to the LP Digital Helpline during the months of January, February, and March.

### **4.2. ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.**

Two OGBV cases were reported via the helpline in January, February, and March.

The two OGBVs were distinct, as follows:

- Sextortion
- Digital defamation

#### **4.2.1. SEXTORTION**

This case was reported to the helpline Manager at The Launchpad Tanzania on 14th March it happened to a female university student who was phished and scammed into sending nude videos and images of herself in exchange for financial assistance from the perpetrators.

During the initial stages of the phishing, the student slipped information about her need for financial assistance to pay her school fees.

Someone else used the content she created and sent to the perpetrators to blackmail her, demanding Tsh 500,000 or else he would publish the footage.

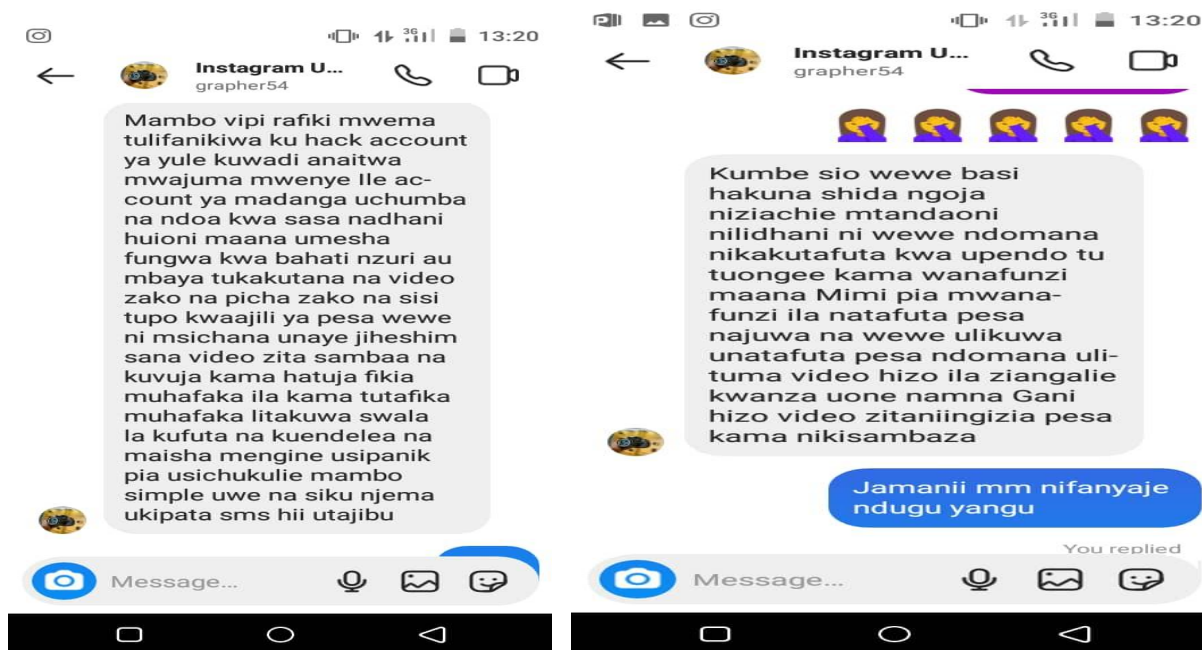
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It all started with a fake account on Instagram which was selling itself first as one of the university pages called university gang which followed the victim for two years until they become friends when the victim was struggling to get university fees a few days before UE(University Examinations) university gangs offered to help the victim by starting recommending some more fake account as seen on the links below.

<https://instagram.com/dayanamtweve?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=>This was a link to a related account where the victim had paid her to be put in touch with the guy who would offer her money in exchange for sending him images of herself in her underwear.

[https://instagram.com/baba\\_carreen?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=](https://instagram.com/baba_carreen?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=) The victim gave the images to this individual via this URL.

<https://instagram.com/grapher54?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=> The URL to the blackmailer is provided here.



These are some screenshots of the victim and the blackmailer's conversations before they posted her recordings on social media.

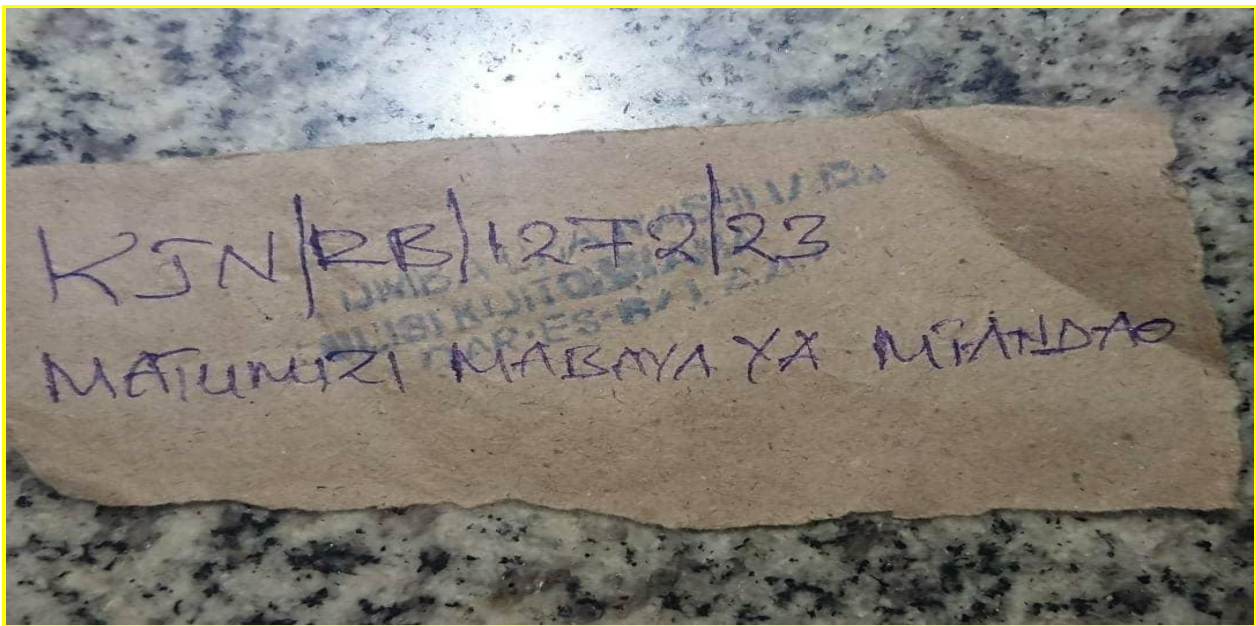
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#### 4.2.2. ACTION.

Before proceeding, we had the opportunity to speak with the victim about the laws, rules, and regulations that should be considered before reporting the case and some potential legal ramifications that might befall her.

With her consent, we assisted the victim in notifying the cybercrime unit team (TCRA) of the incident. We were able to open a case file at the Mabatini police station with the help of TCRA personnel, and an investigator was assigned to the case.

The victim could stop the picture from going viral through the link <http://www.stopncii.org/> by uploading everything on the stopncii website and this was one other digital tool we taught her.



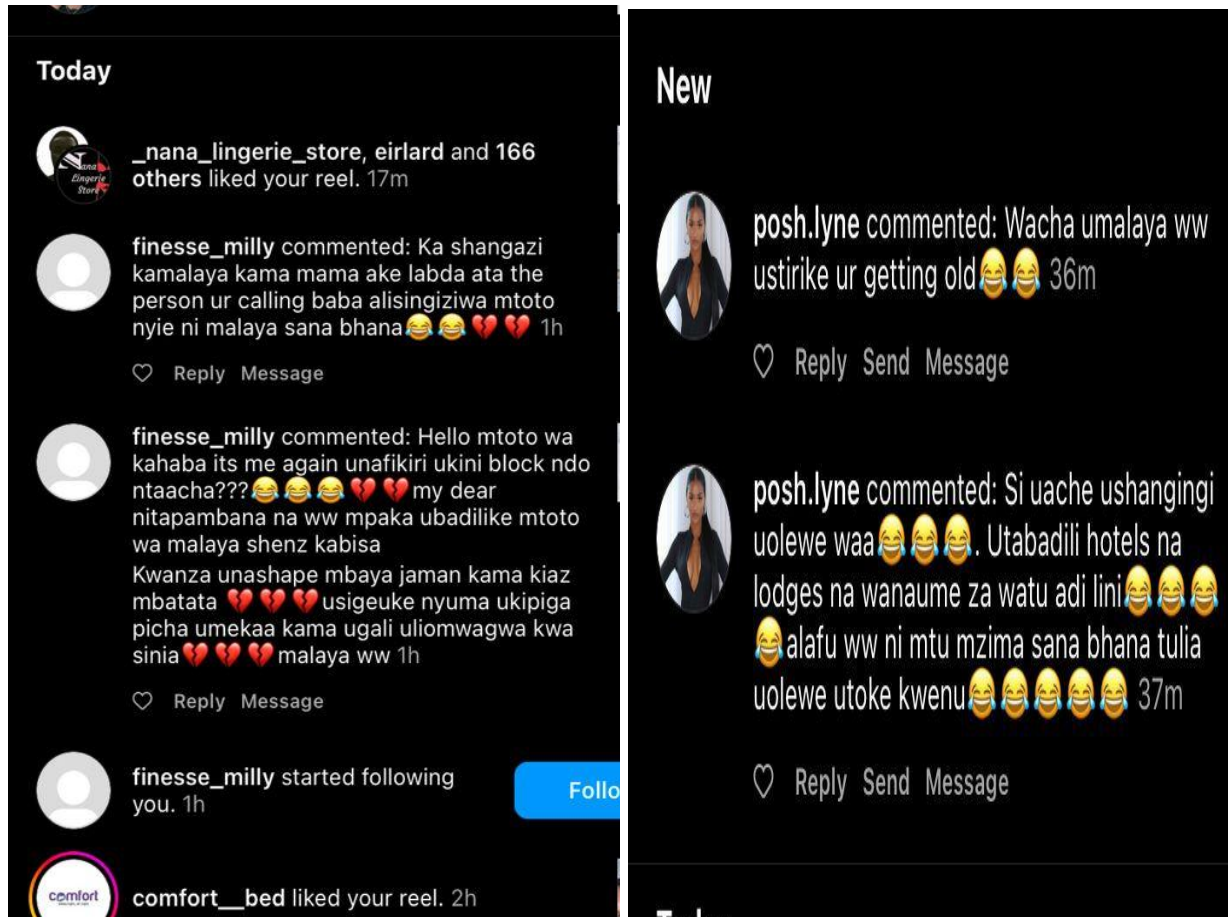
The report book (RB) follow Kijitonyama mabatini polisi station.

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### 4.3. DIGITAL DEFAMATION

On 13th March 2023, this case was reported physically to our offices since the victim was very familiar with what we do.

On Instagram, a female social media user was harassed. The nature of the insults used suggested that the bully was another female who knew the victim.



These are a few screenshots of the insults on the victim's post, in which the bully harassed the victim using various social media handles.

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#### **4.3.1. ACTION.**

The victim made the decision not to contact the police after we described a few options for dealing with the bully, such as reporting them to the police or utilizing online security software to secure her page.

Because the victim is sufficiently skilled in the use of digital tools, we took a slightly different approach in this case. As a result, the LP Digital team consoled her while also assisting her in taking appropriate steps in dealing with a cyberbully.

The following procedures were followed:

- Using screenshots to preserve evidence of abuse
- Reporting the account that was used to abuse her
- Filtering out offensive words through settings available on Instagram so they don't appear in her comments.

#### **4.4. LP DIGITAL PROGRAM**

People appear to be very interested in Launchpad Tanzania's programs. As a result, we receive five to six calls and two to three WhatsApp texts per day inquiring about the programs.

The majority of calls come from Instagram and Twitter users, and the majority of WhatsApp messages come from Facebook users.

People are interested in learning about and participating in the Digital Tanzania program.

#### **4.5. ABOUT WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE**

Numerous phone calls were also placed inquiring about the conference, the registration process for both participation and exhibition and any other pertinent information about the women in technology conference.

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## **5. CHALLENGES**

The most common challenges that the helpline manager faces are as follows:

- Most people are unaware of what constitutes online gender-based violence.
- People don't understand the purpose of the helpline number.
- People make meaningless phone calls and text messages.
- The Helpline has been added to a number of irrelevant Whatsapp groups.
- The helpline number receives business advertisements.

### **Lessons Learned**

- More information about cybercrime law should be shared with digital citizens.
- The authorities (TCRA) must educate the public about their available options when confronted with online violence, as well as the assistance they can provide.
- Covering success stories of cases that received justice is necessary so that people become more forthcoming.

Overall, the fact that we successfully reached our target audience and met our goal demonstrates that we started off on the right foot and that both our audience and we benefited from it.

## **6. RECOMMENDATION**

We need to create more content about what specifically needs to be reported through our helpline number, in addition to other calls inquiring about The Launchpad Tanzania and our activities.

We need to have an integrated system to be able to receive and record the calls and also to avoid unnecessary calls.

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## **7. CONCLUSION - the way forward**

Overall, the fact that we successfully reached our target audience and met our goal shows that we got off to a good start and that both our audience and we benefited from it.