



Asia Regional Symposium on **Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence** **Summary Report**

Bangkok, 15-16 October 2024



What did the Symposium achieve?

The Asia Regional Symposium on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV):

- United those actively working to address the **growing concern of TFGBV in the context of Asia**.
- Focused on **effective programming** to address TFGBV by providing a platform for exchanging regional knowledge and good practices.
- Identified challenges and opportunities to advance progress in **ending TFGBV in the Asia region**.
- Fostered **collaboration and partnership** between actors in the TFGBV space to create innovative solutions.
- **Empowered TFGBV frontline service providers** by providing a safe space for knowledge sharing and experience exchange.

The Asia Regional Symposium on Technology-Facilitated Gender Based Violence (TFGBV) brought together key stakeholders working to address the growing issue of TFGBV in Asia.

Key takeaways from the symposium emphasized the urgent need to adopt inclusive and contextually sensitive frameworks to address TFGBV, the importance of engaging youth and transforming harmful social and gender norms, and the significance of global and regional coordinated efforts and financial commitments to address TFGBV.

The symposium also highlighted the diverse nature of TFGBV, the strong link between online and offline violence, and the disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups. Participants shared their organizations' interventions in areas such as advocacy & campaign, prevention & mitigation, data & research, response, and enabling environment, showcasing a range of innovative approaches to addressing TFGBV.

Key recommendations from the symposium included promoting cultural and linguistic inclusion, enhancing collaborative efforts, empowering women and girls in tech, preparing youth for digital spaces, and promoting safe and ethical use of technology.

Key takeaways

Global and Regional TFGBV Frameworks

- **Align global and regional efforts:** Global initiatives should be adapted locally, involving stakeholders such as frontline workers in GBV and tech companies.
- **Inclusivity, intersectionality and contextual sensitivity:** Effective solutions require inclusivity and sensitivity to cultural and linguistic contexts.
- **Urgent need for more women in Tech:** Increasing the number of women in tech is critical to developing inclusive tech policies and counteracting the trend of fewer women engaging with information communication and technology due to gender bias and GBV.
- **Role of youth in changing discriminatory social and gender norms:** Social and gender norms should be reformed to encourage positive behaviors, and youth should be engaged in initiatives.
- **Mitigating the harms of AI:** AI can not only exacerbates TFGBV through misuse but can also presents broader ethical concerns (like bias and discrimination) and environmental impacts (due to high energy consumption). This highlights the need for responsible and ethical AI development and use.

Key takeaways

What does the research and data tell us?

- **Growing pool of research:** there are increasing examples of regional research on the different forms and harms of TFGBV in Asia as well as studies of particular countries and issues. A [resources folder](#) was established to share research.
- **Diverse nature of TFGBV:** TFGBV manifests differently across regions and perpetrators vary widely compared to other forms of GBV, reflecting intersecting discrimination that affects minorities and vulnerable groups.
- **Online-Offline continuum:** There is a strong link between online and offline violence.
- **Impact on 'at risk' groups:** TFGBV disproportionately impacts adolescents, migrant and refugee women and children, and people with disabilities, with poverty contributing to increased vulnerability, particularly in cases of child exploitation.
- **Gaps in TFGBV response:** Response efforts often lack effectiveness due to conflicting legislations and low reporting.
- **Evidence needs:** Despite these insights, there remains a lack of comprehensive evidence and data on TFGBV's prevalence, impact, and effective response strategies.

Key takeaways

Regional initiatives to address TFGBV

- **Widespread advocacy & campaigns:** Many organizations are using digital platforms and community-level efforts to raise awareness and drive change.
- **Helplines and Hotlines are crucial response tools:** Many countries prioritize helplines and hotlines for TFGBV survivors, providing immediate and ongoing legal aid, psychosocial support, and referrals. Good examples of support for vicarious trauma experienced by hotline staff.
- **Data & research are critical for advancing TFGBV interventions:** There is growing research on misinformation, hate speech, and digital vulnerabilities.
- **Expanding support networks beyond helplines:** Involving parents, teachers, and communities in psychosocial support efforts can create a stronger, more comprehensive safety net.

Key takeaways

Responding to TFGBV - programming guidance

- **Ongoing framework development:** The current TFGBV framework needs continuous input and adaptation to maintain its relevance.
- **Challenges in integrating TFGBV:** Integrating TFGBV into existing GBV programs remains a significant challenge.

- **Tailored support for GBV practitioners:** Localized approaches are needed to address TFGBV in diverse communities.
- **Safe and ethical data management:** Clear guidelines for protecting and managing sensitive data related to TFGBV are essential.
- **Language accessibility for guidance:** Translating existing TFGBV guidance into multiple languages is recommended.

Key takeaways

Safe and ethical use of technology

- **Key areas for Tech Companies:** Tech companies should prioritize survivor-centered design, safety procedures, simplified interfaces, data minimization, privacy by design, and user education initiatives.
- **Use of AI classifiers for safer applications:** AI classifiers can be trained on open-source data for safer applications.
- **Core Safety-by-Design principles:** Service provider responsibility, user empowerment, and transparency.
- **Guidance for GBV practitioners:** Good intentions alone do not ensure safety, and it is important to advocate for minimal data collection and early inclusion of women in tech development processes.

Recommendations for a strong response to TFGBV in Asia

The symposium highlighted the need for cross-sectoral partnerships and regional cooperation to develop impactful solutions for TFGBV. Through group work and rich discussions, participants identified key gaps and put forward the following recommendations for effective TFGBV programming, across the five main areas of work.

- **Advocacy:** Engage wide range of technological platforms in dialogues to raise awareness and improve understanding of cultural, linguistic and contextual realities of communities they serve.
- **Prevention and Mitigation:** Prioritise safe and ethical digital spaces as central to digital culture; partner with tech companies to incorporate safety by design principles; invest in evidence-based interventions that prevent TF GBV, and strengthen collaboration among all actors.
- **Response:** Integrate TFGBV into existing GBV response mechanisms; strengthen capacity of service providers to meet the needs of TFGBV survivors across humanitarian and development contexts
- **Data and Research:** Conduct research on TFGBV prevalence at sub-regional levels to gather comprehensive data on prevalence and impact of TFGBV and influence policy and programming based on evidence and data.
- **Enabling Environment:** Build the capacity of government officials to address TFGBV through a whole of system approach, strengthen digital literacy by integrating it into education systems and mainstream TFGBV prevention and response across various sectors.

Acknowledgements

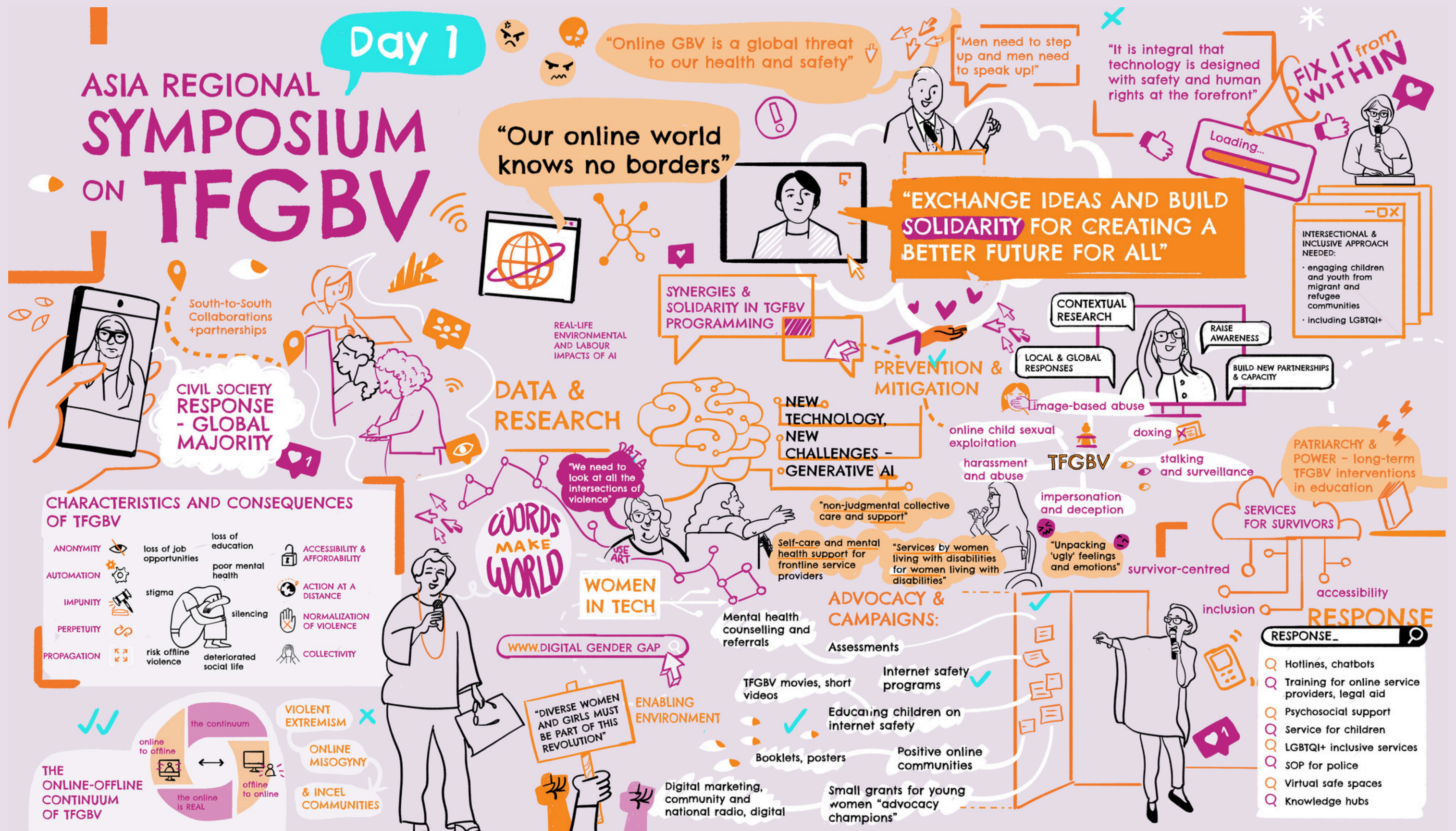
The organizers of the Asia Regional Symposium on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence - UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office, Australia's eSafety Commissioner, and USAID - extend their sincere thanks to all participants and contributors for their active engagement and collaboration.

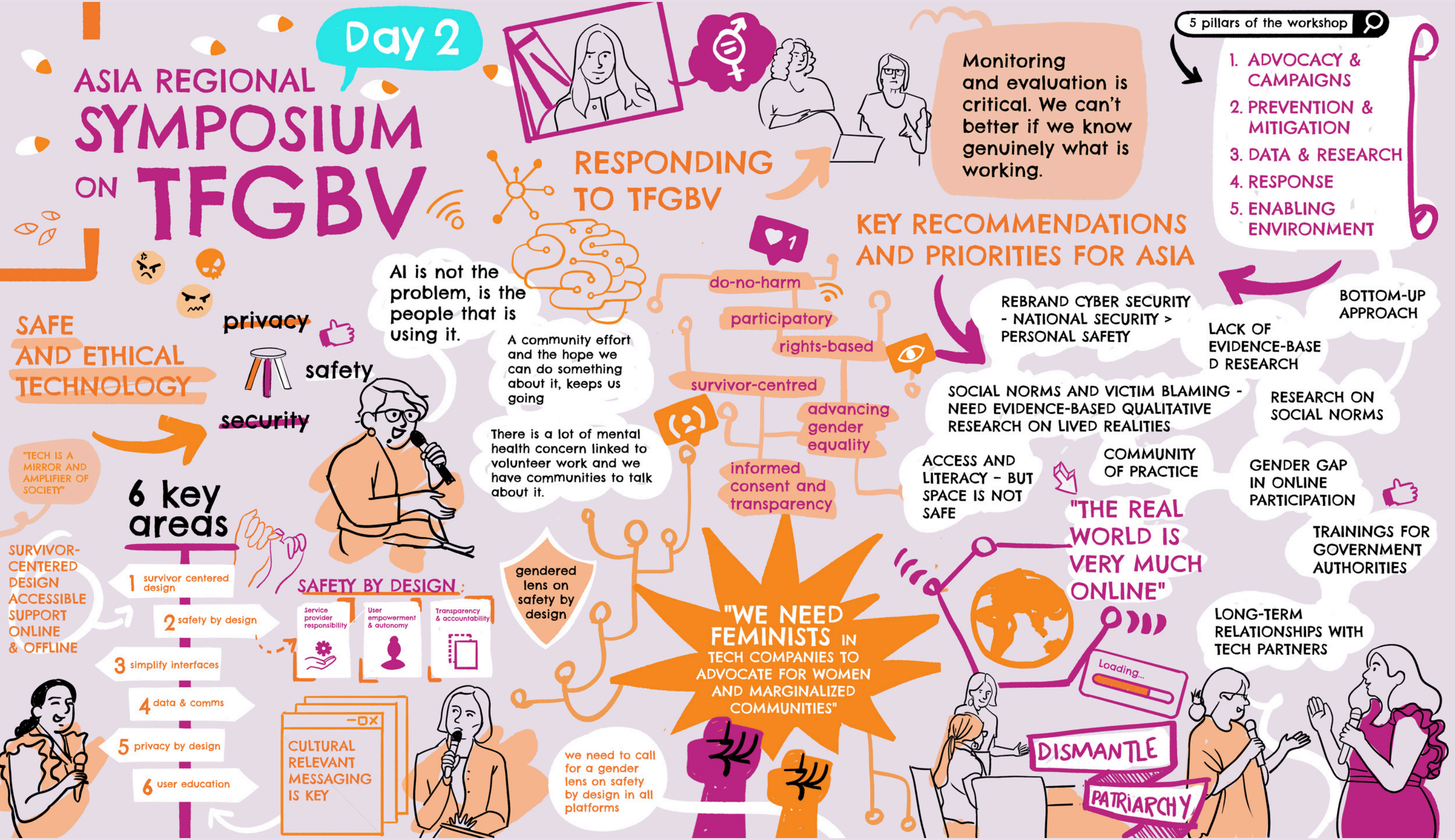
The symposium was enriched by diverse perspectives and expertise. The collective efforts of all involved will pave the way for innovative solutions and impactful change in addressing TFGBV in the region.

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Recommendations for a strong response to TFGBV in Asia

	Advocacy and Campaigns	Prevention and Mitigation	Response	Data and Research	Enabling Environment
Gaps	Limited understanding of the layers and complexity of TFGBV.	Harmful social and gender norms perpetuate GBV, including TFGBV.	Limited support services for TFGBV survivors, especially in local languages.	Lack of evidence-based research, particularly for marginalized communities.	Lack of prioritisation and coordination among government authorities on TFGBV .
	Unresponsive tech partners in addressing these challenges	Digital platforms’ failure to consider diverse cultural and contextual realities of communities they serve	Absence of safety by design in digital platforms.	Limited data on the prevalence of TFGBV.	Gender and digital literacy gaps hinder safe online participation.
			Lack of understanding of the impact on TFGBV by service providers	Challenges in using research effectively due to censorship.	
Recommendations	Engage diverse platforms in dialogue and conversations to raise awareness and improve understanding.	Focus on evidence-based research that links to policy advocacy and community mobilization.	Integrate TFGBV response services into existing GBV services to ensure accessible and localized support.	Provide sustained support for community-led research initiatives, ensuring they receive adequate funding.	Build the capacity of government officials to address TFGBV through a whole of system approach
	Broaden the understanding of cybersecurity to include personal safety.	Partner with tech companies to adapt algorithms that comply with safety by design principles to create a safe digital environment for all	Strengthen the capacity of GBV service providers to understand TFGBV and support survivors across humanitarian and development contexts	Conduct research on TFGBV prevalence at sub-regional levels to gather comprehensive data on prevalence and impact.	Mainstream TFGBV prevention and response across various sectors to create an enabling environment.
	Build long-term relationships with social media platforms and tech partners to better address TFGBV collaboratively.	Strengthen research, advocacy, and the mapping of communities of practice (COPs) to promote collaboration.	Advocate with tech companies for survivor-centred design, safe and ethical use of technology	Ensure research findings are brought back to communities and utilized despite potential censorship challenges.	Strengthen digital literacy by integrating it into education systems and encourage the safe and ethical use of technology for all.







ASIA REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM
ON TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (TF GBV)

TUESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2024

- 8:30-9:00

Registration
- 9:00-9:30

Opening Session

HE Bronte Moules, Australian Ambassador for Human Rights

Mr. Michael Ronning, USAID Regional Mission Director

Mr. Pio Smith, Regional Director, UNFPA Asia Pacific Regional Office

MP Shizuza Terata, MP Japan
- 9:30-9:45

Group photo
- 9:45-11:00

Session 1: Setting the Scene

Objective: Explain what technology-facilitated GBV is and how it manifests?
- 11:00-12:00

Session 2: Global and regional frameworks

Objective: Share common understanding of global frameworks and efforts to address TF GBV and discuss how to contextualise these frameworks for Asia region.
- 12:00-13:00

Lunch break
- 13:00-14:00

Session 3: TF GBV in Asia - What does the research tell us?

Objective: Share regional research/evidence on prevalence and types of TF GBV in Asia and validate the findings through group discussion.
- 14:00-14:30

Session 4: Responding to TF GBV: Programming guidance

Objective: Share existing programming guidance on TF GBV response.
- 14:30-14:45

Break
- 14:45-16:45

Session 5: Regional initiatives to address TF GBV roundtable

Objective: Share examples of regional/national initiatives to respond to and prevent TF GBV.
- 16:45-17:00

Wrap up



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WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2024

- 9:00-9:15

Recap Day 1
- 9:15-10:30

Session 6: Safe and ethical use of technology

Objective: Share existing tools and approaches to enhance application of safety and ethical principles in use of technology.
- 10:30-10:45

Break
- 10:45-12:30

Session 7: Group work to identify regional priorities and recommendation to better address TFGBV in Asia

Objective: Identify priorities and draft a call to action on addressing TF GBV in Asia region.
- 12:30-13:30

Lunch break
- 13:30-15:00

Session 8: Social media self-defense training
- 15:00-15:30

Closing

