Launched during 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, our SheSurfsFreedom survey has brought together over 1,000 voices and experiences of young women from around the world to understand what it’s like to be online, and what needs to be done so that there's freedom and equality.

Girls around the shared their voice from over 70 countries from around the world.

More than 50% of girls and women surveyed answered that they spend over 4 hours of their lives each day online. As we spend more and more of our lives online, we need to ensure that the digital world and experience of being in it, isn’t creating a negative impact on girls’ lives, choices and real life.
Enjoying the online world, girls and women are participating in a range of activities, engaging with people that they know and don't know.

The world becomes less fun when we consider the level of sexual harassment, cyber bullying and scamming that takes place because of gender. **Two thirds** of girls or women asked, told us that have seen and received sexual or violent content that made them feel uncomfortable.

### The facts:
- **66%** of women have seen adult sexual or violent content online that made them feel uncomfortable.
- **45%** of girls have received unwelcome sexual messages.
- **42%** of girls have since changed their behaviour online due to this.

Though girls and women positioned their thoughts of personal safety online at a median score of 5.5, on a scale of 1-10, many are coping or adapting their behaviour as gender based violence is being normalised as part of society.
In response to the question, Do you feel unsafe online? Girls responded:

“Not really, besides the unwanted text messages from old men offering to be my sugar daddys”

“Yes, I was impersonated by another person on Instagram, with pictures of myself that was taken from my private account, made me feel uncomfortable and unable to trust anyone”
- Sri Lanka (Age 16-18)

“Yes, I was cyberbullied and the person would tell me that I should go kill my self and things like that”
- Netherlands Age 19-25

“As a child, being exposed to pornographic material”
- UK (Age 25-35)

“When a person that I didn’t know told me my real location”
- Poland (Age 19-25)

“Yes, I had fake nudes leaked from a guy saying it was me because I stood up for another girl.”
- Lebanon (Age 19-25)

“I have received sexual comments from people older than me, especially at the start of having my own Instagram account, which was 13. These guys sent me inappropriate pictures and also questions that made me feel very uncomfortable such as, if I’d already had my first period and if my breasts are big or not.”
- Malaysia (16-18)

From being sexualised, to being threatened, bullied, scarred by sexual and/or violent content, girls and women are facing additional barriers to their engagement, participation and enjoyment of the online world with devastating consequences.

41% of girls and young women responded that they have received unwanted and unwelcome messages of sexual content.

21% of girls and women have received sexual comments that made them feel uncomfortable.

14% have received threats of sexual or violent behaviour.

Over 30% have felt negative about themselves due to other people's comments on their own or other people's content.

100% of respondents believe that this behaviour, action and violation towards them was because they were girls and women.

Do you think that this happened because you are a girl/woman?

100%
These experiences have both an immediate impact on how girls and women feel, they shared the experience made them feel:

In response to the question, Do you feel unsafe online? Girls responded:

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- Maldives (Age 13-15)

“This experience made me feel unwanted, unworthy, and disrespected.”
- Philippines (Age 16-18)

“I feel like I’m an object and that people think is normal to say or judge everything I do”
- Brunei (Age 16-18)

“It made me feel like I did not fit in anywhere”
- South Africa (Age 16-18)

“It actually makes you feel a bit worthless like it was your mistake my fault”
- Sri Lanka (Age 16-18)

“I feel protection-less, if I do something as a woman, it seems like men are there to judge, and society sees that as normal and the appropriate behaviour of men”
- Germany (Age 19-25)

“Je me suis sentie humiliée”
- France (Age 19-25)

“Questioning myself, less self confident, wondering if it was my mistake, if should have done something differently”
- Austria (Age 19-25)

“Inferior y vulnerable”
- Argentina (Age 19-25)

“Cela m’as donnée l’impression de ne pas savoir quel était mon vrai rôle dans la société”
- Madagascar (Age 19-25)

This immediate impact was also echoed in subsequent actions and ways of being, both online and how they live; where girls and women are questioning their own actions and identity, when it’s the actions of others that are responsible, violating and violent.

42% of girls who have felt harm online have now changed their behaviours as a consequence. Changing behaviour, imposing restrictions on how they engage online and self-censoring.
Has your behaviour changed as a consequence of your experience online?

“I don’t voice out against stuff anymore.”
- Malaysia (Age 13-15)

“I don’t play online games with random groups due to the amount of gender-based insults and harassment”
- Ireland (Age 19-25)

“I’ve stopped using certain social media completely, Instagram and Twitter to be specific, because of how insecure and bullied it made me feel.”
- India (Age 16-18)

“I am skeptical of everything and everyone. Every time I receive a message from a loved one I doubt if it’s really them and wonder if they have been hacked.”
- Domenica (Age 19-25)

“(I) post less and post landscape instead of my face, and have a private account.”
- Malta (Age 19-25)

“I do not upload that often anymore, I try to post pictures without me in it, I look for the “perfect” picture or post nothing”
- Germany (Age 19-25)

Did you seek any help as a result of what happened?

Over 70% of girls and women do not think or know of any tools or services that can be used to stop online violence.

75% of girls and women questioned believe that social media channels should be responsible for making online spaces safer. We call on governments to create the legal infrastructure, with corporate social media companies taking responsibility and increasing safety mechanisms, legislation and a review of damaging policies and algorithms which excuse online violence against women and girls and perpetuate harms.
So that #SheSurfsFreedom, girls and women responded that the one thing that would bring them more freedom would be:

“more age verification so that people under 13 aren’t on tiktok and twitter and things”
- Ireland (Age 13-15)

“Accountability for those who do the wrong thing”
- Australia (Age 19-25)

“immediately blocking the accounts of people practising online violence/harassment”
- Rwanda (Age 19-25)

“Ban the perpetrators for recreating a new account.”
- Malaysia (Age 19-25)

“We believe in and can see a world where there is freedom and gender equality. We are taking this data to New York as part of the #CSW67 activities, and are sharing the knowledge to create change.

We call for change and concrete action so that

#SheSurfsFreedom