



About the SHE LEADS Curriculum on TFGBV

Facilitator's Guide

Who Is a Digital Community Steward and Why are They Important?

A Digital Community Steward (DCS) is an administrator or moderator responsible for managing and nurturing online spaces like Facebook groups, WhatsApp groups, Telegram channels, Reddit threads, or other digital platforms. They shape the tone, interactions, and behavior of members in these spaces, acting as both facilitators and enforcers of community guidelines.

We focus on DCSs because of their immense reach and influence within online communities. As more people connect and express themselves online, these spaces become arenas for both positive engagement and harmful interactions, including technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV).

Digital community stewards have a pivotal role in this context. They have the power to either amplify harm by neglecting problematic behavior, failing to intervene, or even participating in abuse, or they can be key agents for good, proactively addressing harmful behaviors, enforcing community guidelines, and promoting a safe, respectful space for all members.

By providing digital community stewards with the right tools, training, and awareness, we aim to empower them to foster more positive and inclusive online communities. Our goal is to ensure that these spaces contribute to healthy discourse, support for survivors, and the prevention of harm.

Who Is This Training For and How Can You Use It?

This training is specifically designed for Digital Community Stewards (DCSs) who are looking to improve their skills as digital leaders. Whether you're an administrator or moderator of a Facebook group, WhatsApp group, Telegram channel, or any other online community, this training will help you become a more effective moderator, create safer digital spaces, and take better care of your members.

Our curriculum consists of 8 modules, each focused on different aspects of community management and digital leadership. These modules include increasing member engagement, ensuring group safety, combating false information, practicing nonviolent communication and more.



Firstly, remember that online communities will differ depending on where you conduct the training and who your audience is. While some communities may rely heavily on Facebook groups, others may use platforms like Telegram channels, WhatsApp groups, or other online forums. It's essential to understand the specific platform and community dynamics before choosing the most relevant modules for training.

The curriculum is flexible, allowing you to choose and combine the modules based on your training needs and the specific challenges your community faces. Depending on the requirements of the stewards you are working with, as well as the unique dynamics of your online community, you can decide whether to focus on one module or use a combination of them.

For example, if you're training a group of stewards who manage a Facebook group and are struggling with issues like spam, misinformation, and fake news, you might want to focus on the module about Combating False Information. This module will help them learn how to identify, address, and report false or misleading content in their group, protecting the community from harm.

On the other hand, if you're working with a steward managing a large WhatsApp group where members are sharing harmful content, bullying, or using offensive language, the module on Nonviolent Communication would be a better fit. This module will teach stewards how to respond to harmful behavior effectively, de-escalate conflicts, and promote respectful communication within their groups.

The training can be conducted online or offline, and we recommend working with groups of fewer than 20 participants at a time to encourage more interaction and engagement during the sessions. This allows for deeper discussions and more personalized learning experiences.

How to Conduct SHE LEADS Training with Cultural Sensitivity

When delivering the SHE LEADS training, it's essential to recognize that concepts such as violence, community, gender, and even technology differ greatly across cultures and societies. The way violence occurs, the way communities function, and who has the right to be online can vary depending on factors such as traditions, social norms, and legal systems. As a trainer, it is your responsibility to approach these topics with care, ensuring that your training is both respectful and effective across cultural contexts.



Here are some guidelines on how to conduct the SHE LEADS training with cultural sensitivity:

1. Understand the Local Context

Before you begin training, take the time to understand the cultural, legal, and social landscape of the country or community you're working in. This includes:

- The definition of violence: Different cultures may perceive certain actions as violent or non-violent based on their norms. For instance, some may not recognize online harassment as a form of violence, while others may have legal definitions that include it.
- Gender roles and expectations: Gender norms can vary widely. What may be seen as an acceptable gender role in one culture might be highly restrictive or controversial in another.
- Online access: Who has the right to access the internet, and how freely, also varies. In some places, online spaces may be dominated by men, while in others, women and marginalized groups may have limited access to digital platforms. Understanding these dynamics is crucial.

2. Be Open to Multiple Definitions

A key aspect of cultural sensitivity is recognizing that concepts like violence, gender, and community may not have a one-size-fits-all definition. When discussing these concepts:

- Ask participants how violence is understood in their context. Be open to hearing different interpretations.
- Allow discussions about community to explore who holds power in different spaces—whether it's traditional authority figures, local organizations, or influential individuals online.
- Discuss how gender is constructed in their society. For example, in some cultures, the concept of gender may be strictly binary, while others recognize more fluid identities.

3. Adapt Your Language and Examples

Using examples and terminology that are relevant to the local context is important in making sure the training resonates. Avoid using overly technical or foreign examples that might not apply to the participants' realities. Instead:



- Use local examples of TFGBV if possible. If not, create hypothetical scenarios that reflect the culture and online practices of the participants.
- Avoid assumptions. For instance, don't assume that everyone has access to smartphones or high-speed internet, or that all community members are treated equally online.

4. Facilitate Safe and Inclusive Conversations

When discussing sensitive topics like gender-based violence, it's important to create a space where participants feel safe to share their thoughts and experiences without fear of judgment. Some ways to do this include:

- Acknowledge that discomfort is part of the learning process but be mindful of the emotional impact of discussions around violence. Always allow participants to opt out if a topic is triggering.
- Encourage inclusive dialogue where different perspectives can be shared respectfully. Make sure that all voices are heard, especially those from marginalized groups who may be underrepresented in discussions about gender or violence.
- Be mindful of power dynamics in the room. If there are participants from different genders, classes, or authority levels, ensure that everyone feels empowered to participate.

5. Respect Local Laws and Policies

The legal landscape around gender-based violence and online spaces will vary across regions. Some countries may have strict laws protecting online freedom, while others may have restrictive laws around digital access, surveillance, or gender-related issues.

- Familiarize yourself with the local laws related to online harassment, TFGBV, and digital privacy. In some cases, you may need to adapt your advice or recommendations to align with local legal frameworks.
- If discussing legal topics, encourage participants to explore how their local laws affect the prevention and response to TFGBV.

6. Encourage Empathy and Understanding

Finally, emphasize the importance of empathy in combating TFGBV. Remind participants that the ultimate goal of the training is to help prevent harm and build safer online communities. Approaching every discussion with empathy ensures that



participants stay focused on protecting their communities, rather than getting caught in debates over cultural differences.

Encourage trainers to:

- Listen actively to the concerns of participants.
- Approach differences in perception and experience with curiosity rather than judgment.
- Promote respectful communication, modeling the nonviolent communication techniques taught in the training.

By incorporating these principles, you can help ensure that your TFGBV training is not only effective but also culturally sensitive, respectful, and adaptable to the diverse communities you work with.

What Other Resources Can I Use?

In addition to this curriculum, we offer a broader [Digital Community Stewards \(DCS\) curriculum](#) that doesn't solely focus on TFGBV but aims to build social cohesion within online communities. You can take inspiration from there for general stewardship practices.

We've also developed a [DCS online course collection](#). If you're unable to cover all the modules in this training, you can direct stewards to complete some of these one-hour online courses. These courses provide additional skills for managing online spaces and are currently available in English.

How Can I Be in Touch?

To stay connected and learn more about our **SHE LEADS** project, which focuses on building safe, respectful, and inclusive online spaces, you can follow us on our social media platforms. There, you'll find updates, resources, and opportunities to engage further.