

Kuyenda Collective Joins Global Call During 16 Days of Activism: Raising the Torch on Digital Violence as a Barrier to Education

8 December 2025

The Kuyenda Collective joins the global community in commemorating the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, standing behind the 2025 theme: *“Unite to End Digital Violence Against All Women and Girls.”*

This year, the Collective calls renewed attention to a rapidly escalating but often overlooked crisis: the rise of digital violence and its direct impact on girls’ access to safe, equitable and meaningful education.

The shift to digital and hybrid learning, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has opened new doors for education but also new avenues for harm. Online harassment, gender-based hate speech, non-consensual image sharing, stalking, and threats now follow girls into school WhatsApp groups, Zoom classrooms, Google Meet sessions, and other e-learning platforms.

For many rural girls who already struggle with limited access to devices, unreliable connectivity, and low-digital literacy, this violence poses a painful choice - stay connected and risk abuse, or disconnect and fall behind.

Evidence gathered by the Kuyenda Rural Youth Collectives reveals a clear pattern:

- The digital divide remains deeply gendered: Girls in Sub-Saharan Africa are far less likely to have the devices, connectivity or skills needed for meaningful participation.
- Digital violence drives disengagement: Many girls are often forced, or risk being forced, to withdraw from digital learning spaces - like school WhatsApp groups or e-learning platforms - to avoid abuse, directly impacting their learning outcomes.
- Education systems are largely unprepared: Too few schools or ministries offer gender-sensitive digital safety policies, reporting channels or teacher guidance on safe technology use.

The Kuyenda Collective stands by the belief that digital violence is not separate from education – it directly undermines access, participation and quality learning for girls. Safe digital environments are thus essential if technology is to benefit all learners rather than deepen inequality.

Raising the Torch on Digital Violence as a Barrier to Education

Throughout the 16 Days of Activism, 25 November to 10 December 2025, the Kuyenda Collective and its partners - FAWEMA (Malawi), CESC (Mozambique), Policy Forum (Tanzania), Teach for Zimbabwe and PSAM - is marking these 16 days of activism by amplifying rural youth



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voices to show how digital violence directly undermines attendance, participation, mental wellbeing and learning outcomes.

Through stories collected by youth advocates we endeavor to highlight the harm, self-censorship, and disengagement girls experience when faced with digital harassment.

The campaign advances four key messages rooted in both rights and accountability:

1. Access + Safety = Equity: Digital access alone does not guarantee learning – girls must be safe online for education to be truly inclusive.
2. Girls Belong in Digital Learning Spaces: Girls deserve voice, protection, and leadership opportunities in all learning environments.
3. Digital Violence is a Learning Barrier: Harassment undermines confidence, participation, attendance and educational outcomes.
4. Accountability Matters: Schools, policymakers and technology actors must deliver gender-responsive digital safety frameworks, particularly as learning is diversified to include digital learning including for rural girls.

The Kuyenda Collective urges governments, school leaders, educators, telecommunications companies and civil society across Southern Africa to strengthen digital safety policies, invest in equitable access, and ensure girls' voices guide reforms.

Ending digital violence against women and girls is essential to delivering the safe, equitable and quality education that every girl deserves.

About the Kuyenda Collective

The Kuyenda Collective is a regional consortium of organizations working in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe to advance universal access, equity, accountability and gender-responsiveness in public education systems. Through evidence generation by the Kuyenda Rural Youth Collectives (RYCs), community advocacy and transnational collaboration, the Collective ensures that the voices of young people, including rural learners, shape policies and investments in education and governance.

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