

Call for proposals: Critical digital literacy – what works to help reduce online misogyny and gendered disinformation

ODI Global's ALIGN programme is looking for two partners from different world regions in the Global South (preferably), to conduct primary research on how critical digital literacy programmes lead to change in participants' skills, attitudes and behaviour.

Background

Gendered harms and risks online are well documented. They include gendered mis- and disinformation that can underpin political radicalisation, propagation of misogynistic worldviews, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) ([Lazard et al., 2025](#); UNFPA, 2024). UN Women ([2025](#)) estimates that, globally, between 16 and 58 per cent of women have experienced TFGBV.

The scale of TF-GBV and the propagation of misogynistic content is inherently linked to the current polycrisis – multiple, reinforcing crises of growing inequalities, democratic decline and political instability among others. For example, those creating misogynistic content online prey on boys and men who feel economically, socially or politically disenfranchised ([Cala et al., 2024](#); [Gottzén et al., 2025](#); [Hayes et al., 2024](#)). They are aided by the design of algorithms and biases in the data that trains large language models, as well as the business models of social media and tech companies, that reward and promote hate and controversial content to maximise profits ([di Meco, 2023](#)).

Though adolescents and young people ('Generations Z and Alpha') are often seen as 'digital natives', growing evidence shows that young people are not necessarily more confident and skilled in navigating the online world than other generations ([Bărbuță and Roth, 2024](#); [Kyrychenko et al., 2025](#)). More effective critical digital and media literacy both in school and community settings has therefore become increasingly prioritised by global bodies such as UNESCO or the Council of Europe ([Chowdhury, 2023](#); [CoE, 2024](#)). In some countries, such as the UK, this is tied in with policy commitments on reducing online misogyny.

About the project

It is in this context of soaring TF-GBV and gender mis- and disinformation that ALIGN/ODI Global is seeking to boost evidence about the potential of gender-responsive critical digital, media and AI literacy to help prevent and reduce TF-GBV and gender disinformation ([Frau Meigs and Velez, 2024](#)). The project's working definition of gender-responsive critical digital literacy programmes refers to those that build skills to understand, identify and respond appropriately to online misogyny and gendered disinformation. A TF-GBV prevention programme that does not seek to build these critical skills would fall outside the scope of this project.

ODI Global is aiming to identify two partners, ideally from different world regions and preferably from the Global South, to understand the changes that critical digital literacy programmes have on participants' skills, attitudes and behaviour.

Project objectives

The project aims to:

- Generate new insight rooted in primary data collection and practical experiences from organisations that deliver critical digital, media and AI literacy or citizenship programmes to young people or adults
- Evaluate gendered approaches in critical digital, media and AI literacy or citizenship or otherwise learn about the impact and outcomes of gender-responsive interventions and programming
- Advance insights from under-researched contexts, as most available evidence on critical digital literacy originates from the Global North and English dominated contexts ([Evans et al., 2025](#))
- Enable sharing of experiences and emerging positive practices on gender-responsive critical digital literacy.

Key research questions

1. What impact, if any, are critical digital literacy programmes or initiatives having on any of the following areas:

- Knowledge and skills to identify online misogyny and gendered mis/disinformation
- Responses to online misogyny and gender mis/disinformation (such as sharing of harmful content)
- Attitudes towards gender equality (understood as shaped by and intersecting with other forms of power and difference, such as race, ethnicity, class or religion)
- Broader changes in participants' lives (such as behaviours, values and democratic engagement)

2. What aspects of the critical digital literacy initiative(s) or project(s) examined strengthen gender-responsive or gender-transformative competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values)? In particular:

- What areas of curriculum content and pedagogic approaches appear most effective?
- What institutional arrangements (e.g. integration with government-approved school curricula and/or strategies, such as on gender-based violence or AI literacy) increase the likelihood of effectiveness?

Project budgets

The anticipated budget per organisation/team is between £15,000-£20,000. This budget is intended to cover research, evaluation and learning activities, but can possibly also be used for some delivery of activities, if needed for the research. Possible dissemination activities following completion of the research will be financed under a separate contract.

Anticipated impact

The research is intended to offer insights, good practices and suggestions for policy makers, and formal and non-formal education practitioners, in government, civil society organisations, UN entities and other relevant stakeholders, including social media and other tech companies.

Expected outputs and deliverables

To enable learning and sharing between teams, the working language of the project will be English. **The project is expected to start in January 2027 and must be completed by end of January 2028.**

The partner organisation will be responsible for the following tasks. Please note this list is indicative and not exhaustive and will be finalised in collaboration with the selected partner.

- Co-design a research approach and workplan with ODI Global/ALIGN team
- Co-design and pilot research instruments with ODI Global/ALIGN team
- Complete any ethical reviews required in country of study (the study will also need ODI Global's ethical clearance)
- Undertake data collection, and lead analysis and writing of a research report
- Participation in online meetings and possibly an in-person validation workshop, exchanging insights with the ODI Global team and the other research partner
- If relevant, translation of the report or an executive summary to one additional language of relevance to the study context
- Undertake a dissemination event or other activity to disseminate findings (under follow-on contract).

What you can expect from us

ODI Global is a global affairs think tank, headquartered in London that seeks to generate robust evidence and ideas to inspire positive change. The ALIGN platform is an initiative led by ODI Global, focusing on generating and sharing evidence on action to promote inclusion and equitable gender norms. ODI Global is committed to an ongoing process of decolonising research and policy practice. This approach includes co-creating research design. We hope to amplify the voices of partners and facilitate ground-breaking research that brings new ideas and perspectives to a wider global audience. We are committed to mutually growing a working partnership and respecting different types of knowledge, language and ways of working.

In addition, working with the ODI Global team you can also expect:

Project management: The team will provide technical support, quality assurance and oversights of the project. We will support the partner with the process of collecting and analysing data, and writing up the results.

Publication: ALIGN will provide copy-editing, publication production and design support, as required. All outputs will be published on the ALIGN platform (and thus open access). Our partners are encouraged to share outputs with their networks. Where appropriate, ALIGN will work with the partner to facilitate international dissemination.

Reporting: A simple financial and narrative reporting framework will be agreed at contracting. The partner will also be expected to participate in regular check-in meetings with the ALIGN team.

Learning: ALIGN will monitor and reflect on our partnership, and share learning about the research and partnership process and activities. ALIGN encourages partners to feed back on their experience of partnering with us. We may use our learning to influence donors' funding models and strategies.

Who can apply?

ALIGN/ODI Global invites applications from organisations or a team of consultants with a track record in critical digital, media and AI literacy programmes (or similar such initiatives targeting gendered mis- or dis-information and online misogyny), especially in countries of the Global South. Teams could be a partnership between an implementing organisation and a research/evaluation organisation or consultant.

All organisations or consultants must have **indemnity insurance or a locally relevant equivalent** that provides cover for professional services.

How to apply

The application will be a two-stage process.

Stage 1: Interested teams should submit an expression of interest in English of 6-8 pages, which should include:

- A plan for how the project objectives can be met; how the research questions can be answered; any additional research questions.
- A brief description of the policy context and the intervention(s) or programme(s) that would be the focus of the study, demonstrating why this research is relevant and feasible.
- The proposed team, highlighting both programmatic/technical expertise, prior experience with the initiative(s) to be examined, and any relevant research or evaluation skills. Please include short CVs of key team members as an annex (in any suitable format).
- Indicative budget split between personnel daily rate and number of work days and expenditure costs such as travel.

Stage 2: Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit additional information, including a writing sample, and attend an online interview with the ODI Global team.

Please send your Expression of Interest to align@odi.org.uk by 23:59 GMT on 2 December 2026. Any questions can also be sent to this address up to 23 November.