

CONNECTED, CONTESTED AND RESILIENT

A FEMINIST STUDY OF ORGANISING, DIGITAL SAFETY, LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND THE 2026 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN UGANDA'S WEST NILE REGION

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STUDY AT A GLANCE

72%
of participants were Ugandan nationals; the rest were refugees

6 wks
of fieldwork, September to 14 October 2026, before, during and after the election

10–12
key informant interviews with purposively selected leaders and partners

4 FGDs
in each project area, with 24–32 participants

30–35
organisers answered a non-identifying questionnaire

95%
confidence level, with a margin of error of about 10%

SECTION

Acknowledgement

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While this study was made possible with support from APC through funding from the Numun Fund, the findings, interpretations, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this report are those of Feminature Uganda and the research team. They do not necessarily reflect the views or official positions of APC or the Numun Fund.

CHAPTER 01

Introduction

This study report presents the results, methodology, discussions, recommendations, and conclusion on "*Connected, Contested and Resilient: Study of feminist organising, digital safety, legal frameworks and the 2026 general elections in Uganda's West Nile region*" commissioned by Feminature Uganda. The study has produced a rigorous, intersectional evidence base on feminist organising, digital safety, regulation and electoral participation in West Nile, supporting Feminature Uganda, refugee and host-community organisers, election observers and civil-society partners to advocate for safer digital participation by marginalised women during political transitions.

1.1 Background to study

Technology has become a pivotal global tool in recent decades for advancing the feminist agenda, particularly among young feminists. With the widespread availability of smartphones and easy access to social media platforms, users now have access to information on subjects ranging from politics to women's rights, economic and social issues. These platforms have also become hubs for socialisation and timely updates on social issues. These technological advancements have given feminists opportunities for activism that were previously unavailable. With these spaces, feminists have a wider audience, a community for mobilisation, and the reach to push an agenda in a shorter period than before. While young feminists largely dominate the use of these tools and spaces, the technologies have come with a number of issues such as TFGBV, harassment, censorship, among others. To navigate these challenges, feminist organisers must adapt dynamically by deploying strategies across online, offline, and hybrid spaces. Faced with a historically patriarchal cultural landscape, deep-seated gender-based violence (GBV), and a complex humanitarian context hosting large refugee populations, regional movements navigate physical boundaries and systemic digital divides through fluid, multi-layered organising. As an organising field of activism, however, questions remain about whether these spaces are sufficient and effective for feminist activism.

Feminature Uganda, as an organising institution, convenes and supports feminist movements, women-led organisations and women human-rights defenders across the West Nile region to challenge some of the issues. The work includes movement building, advocacy, peacebuilding, digital safety, collective care and strengthening the participation of refugee and host community women in public life. This is because feminist organisers are increasingly combining digital tools with face-to-face/physical and community-based organising to advance the status quo of feminist organising. Mobile phones, messaging applications, social media, radio, voice calls and informal networks can expand access to information, solidarity, rapid response, voter education and civic participation. At the same time, unequal access to devices, connectivity costs, household control of technology, surveillance, internet disruptions, misinformation and technology-facilitated gender-based violence can reproduce or deepen existing inequalities. Uganda's 2026 general elections provide an important context for examining these dynamics.

From this background, Feminature Uganda commissioned this study. The study explored the pre election, election, and post-election periods and situations, and how technology has influenced information access, mobilisation, observation, peacebuilding, public participation, and safety. It examined how the electoral environment affected the access, usage, availability, safety and governance of digital spaces in West Nile.

1.2 Project Scope

The study was conducted in both refugee and host communities in West Nile. The study covered urban, peri-urban, and rural areas and targeted different actors. The study ran for approximately 6 weeks, from September to 14th October 2026, and examined experiences before, during, and after the 2026 general elections, while also considering longer-term patterns of feminist organising and digital risk.

1.3 Purpose of the Assignment

The purpose of the study was to produce a rigorous, intersectional and practical evidence base on feminist organising, digital safety, regulation and electoral participation in West Nile. The findings are meant to support Feminature Uganda, refugee and host-community organisers, election observers, and civil-society partners in advocating for safer digital participation by marginalised women during political transitions.

1.3.1 Overall objective

The overall objective was to analyse how feminist organising in West Nile occurs across online, offline and hybrid spaces, examining the risks and resilience practices that shape such organising, the influence of legal and policy frameworks, and the role of technology and digital spaces in relation to the 2026 general elections.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

01 Map and analyse feminist actors, networks, organising spaces, communication channels, and movement relationships, and the ways refugee and host-community organisers use online, offline, hybrid, and low-technology approaches, including their access to devices, connectivity, electricity, digital skills, and secure communication.

02 Examine risks, harms, and resilience practices affecting feminist organising by documenting digital, physical, psychosocial, legal, reputational, and economic risks, including technology-facilitated gender-based violence, surveillance, censorship, misinformation, disinformation, and connectivity disruptions, and by identifying community-led security, care, referral, and rapid-response mechanisms.

03 Assess the legal and policy environment shaping feminist organising in digital and physical spaces by examining relevant laws, policies, institutional practices, and available remedies, and how these frameworks enable, constrain, or otherwise affect the safety, participation, and civic space of feminist actors.

04 Examine and document how technology supported or impeded election information, mobilisation, observation, peacebuilding and incident reporting.

05 Identify community-led security, care, resilience, referral and rapid-response practices.

06 Produce practical recommendations for advocacy, policy reform, programming and feminist movement infrastructure.

1.4 Target Audience and End Users of the Study

The primary audience and intended users of the study included: refugee-led and host-community women's organisations and informal feminist groups; women human-rights defenders, peace advocates and community organisers; young women and women with disabilities; rural, low-income and informal-sector women organisers; women journalists, community communicators and election observers; women candidates or political organisers; digital rights, legal aid, civil-society and humanitarian actors and relevant public institutions and technology or telecommunications stakeholders.

WHO THE STUDY IS FOR

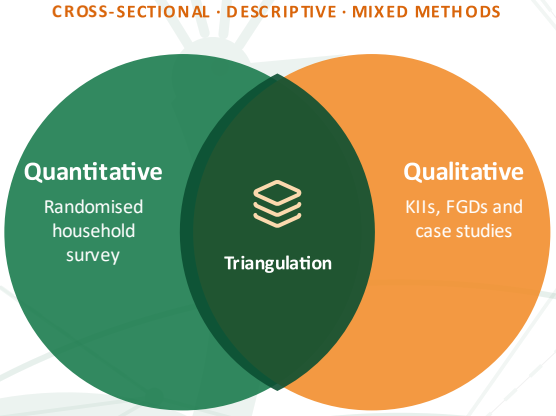
- Refugee-led and host-community women's organisations
- Women human-rights defenders, peace advocates and community organisers
- Young women and women with disabilities
- Rural, low-income and informal-sector women organisers
- Women journalists, community communicators and election observers
- Women candidates and political organisers
- Digital rights, legal aid, civil-society and humanitarian actors
- Public institutions, technology and telecom stakeholders

CHAPTER
02 Approach and Methodology

This section outlines the study's technical approach and methodology. Our methodology combined quantitative surveys and qualitative inquiries. Qualitative data were prioritised, as stated in the ToR.

2.1 Study Design and Strategy

A cross-sectional, descriptive, and mixed-methods design was deployed. The approach triangulates quantitative data from a randomised household survey with qualitative insights from semi-structured Key Informant Interviews, Focused Group Discussions, and case studies. Quantitative tools measured progress towards digital freedom. Qualitative methods explored the causal mechanics behind observed changes, capturing the perspectives of different stakeholders, including local government, partner staff, and vulnerable sub-populations. The core interest in this assignment was to generate information that addresses the objectives of this study. While the study aimed for depth, lived experience, community interpretation, and actionable findings rather than statistical representation, our methodology investigated risks, agency, resilience, and alternatives as described in the ToR.



Qualitative data prioritised, as stated in the ToR

The general summary of the assignment included:



Literature review | **Primary data collection** | **Data analysis and report writing** | **Development of standardised tools for the IGAs** | **Presentation of findings**

2.2 Data requirements and data collection methods

The study required mainly qualitative data (primary and secondary), and to some extent the researcher also collected quantitative data. The study obtained primary data through focus group discussions (FGDs) with randomly selected members of the host and refugee communities. More information was collected through key informant interviews with refugee-led and host-community women's organisations and informal feminist groups; women human-rights defenders, peace advocates and community organisers; young women and women with disabilities; rural, low-income and informal-sector women organisers; women journalists, community communicators and election observers; women candidates or political organisers; digital rights, legal aid, civil-society and humanitarian actors and relevant public institutions and technology and any development partners that have presence in the study areas. Secondary data were obtained from relevant reports, databases and research publications, including academic theses and journal papers.

PRIMARY DATA

- Focus group discussions with randomly selected host and refugee community members
- Key informant interviews with organisations, defenders, journalists, institutions and partners

SECONDARY DATA

- Reports, databases and research publications, including academic theses and journal papers

2.3 Sampling Strategy

All targeted participants for KIIs and case studies were purposely selected based on the list provided in the ToR. FGDs, Key informant interviews and observations were also conducted. However, individual respondents were selected randomly during the data collection sessions. The formula below was used to determine the sample size per school.

Algebraically, pi represents the proportion of the population included in the stratum, and N represents the total sample size. The sample size (N) for the whole constituency baseline survey will therefore be calculated as shown below:

SAMPLE SIZE FORMULA

$$N = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

Where N = Sample size (households)
Z = Z score (1.96 for a 95% confidence level)
P = (Probability that the event being measured will occur, which is fixed at 0.5)
e = margin of error (%- approximately 10%)

The data collection targeted the following cohorts:

- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** Approximately 10–12 key informants were purposively selected and interviewed, including movement leaders, refugee-led organisations, digital safety practitioners, journalists, observers, legal or human-rights actors, civil-society and humanitarian partners, and selected institutional or telecommunications stakeholders.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Four (4) FGDs were conducted in each project area, comprising 24–32 participants, and included refugee women and refugee-led organisers; host-community grassroots organisers; young women and women with disabilities; and women human-rights defenders, journalists, peace advocates, or election observers.
- **Non-identifying questionnaire:** approximately 30–35 organisers were randomly selected to answer a short questionnaire about their lived experience and community interpretations.
- Literature reviews were conducted to use available information while addressing the objectives of this study.

Data saturation was treated as an ongoing methodological decision throughout the qualitative data process. Saturation was assessed by examining whether additional data yielded new themes, codes, and insights aligned with the evaluation questions.

Table: categories of respondents

Tool	Category of respondents
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	10–12 key informants. These included; • Movement leaders • Refugee-led organisations • Digital safety practitioners • Journalists • Observers • Legal or human-rights actors • Civil-society and humanitarian partners • Telecommunications
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	Four (4) FGDs were conducted, and the four categories were followed; • Refugee women and refugee-led organisers • Host-community grassroots organisers • Young women and women with disabilities • Women human-rights defenders, journalists, peace advocates, or election observers.

Tool	Category of respondents
Questionnaire	30–35 organisers were randomly selected from; • Movement leaders • Refugee-led organisations • Digital safety practitioners • Journalists • Observers • Legal or human-rights actors • Civil-society and humanitarian partners • Telecommunications • Refugee women and refugee-led organisers • Host-community grassroots organisers • Young women and women with disabilities • Women human-rights defenders • Peace advocates

2.4 Data Analysis and Analytical Software

Quantitative and qualitative data processing was executed using professional data analytics software:

- **Quantitative Data Analysis (SPSS/STATA):** Google Analytics data was exported directly into SPSS and MS Excel. Frequency distributions disaggregated by gender, education, age, nature of child/youths, disability, and other relevant variables were obtained. The questionnaire data were interpreted and integrated with the qualitative data, without graphics.
- **Qualitative Data Analysis:** Audio-recorded data from FGDs, case studies, and KIIs were transcribed, typed in English, and analysed using Content and Thematic techniques. Themes were based on the evaluation objectives. Processing of qualitative data proceeded as follows:

Audio-recorded data
FGDs, case studies and KIIs

Transcribed

Typed in English

Content and thematic analysis
Themes based on the evaluation objectives

2.5 Ethical Standards, Quality Assurance, and Safeguarding

To ensure technical integrity and protect all evaluation participants, the following protocols were strictly enforced:

SAFEGUARDS BUILT INTO THE STUDY

Quality assurance
Daily data checks; 10% transcript audit

Informed consent and privacy
Voluntary, confidential, right to stop

Safeguarding and safe spaces
Child safeguarding and PSEA training

Data security
End-to-end encryption; safe device custody

Tool piloting
Field-tested; participatory design

Trained, supervised assistants
Closely supervised research team

- **Quality Assurance:** Daily survey data uploads were verified for completeness, survey duration, and GPS logic. A senior researcher conducted logic checks and cleaned the data. Qualitative transcripts were randomly audited (10% sample) against raw audio files.
- **Informed Consent & Privacy:** For the household survey interview, consent was embedded in the digital data collection tool; once the respondent consented to proceed with the interview, the tool marked consent as "Yes". Respondents who declined to participate were not interviewed. The consent section of the tool bore the standard ethical principles of privacy, confidentiality, voluntary participation, etc. Respondents were informed of their right to stop or skip questions. For KIIs and FGDs, participants signed written consent. The team separated personal identifying information from analytical datasets and provided it to the Commissioner upon request.
- **Safeguarding & Safe Spaces:** All interviewers underwent training on child safeguarding and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and signed consent to adhere to the safeguarding protocol during the evaluation process. Interviews were conducted in private, comfortable, and safe environments, and the consultant team engaged respondents during work hours.
- **Data Security (Cloud DMS):** Data was managed securely, utilising end-to-end encryption. Additionally, enumerators were instructed to ensure safe custody of the digital gadgets they were using to conduct survey interviews and to immediately submit data whenever properly reviewed
- **Tool Piloting:** The consultant conducted field testing of the tool to ascertain fit for the purpose of the tools.
- The consultant adopted a participatory approach to developing the research instruments.
- Data collection (research) assistants were carefully selected and trained in both the basics of data collection and the specific requirements for this evaluation study.
- Selected supervisors closely supervised the research assistants to ensure process and outcome quality.



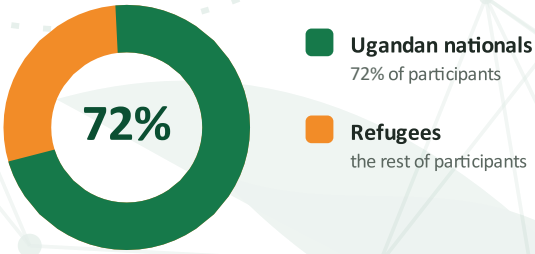
CHAPTER 03

Study Results

3.1 Socio-Economic

The study collected data from different actors within different communities in West Nile. Respondents included journalists, CSOs in feminist organising, security forces, politicians, students, refugees, grassroots organisers, among others. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the participants were Ugandan nationals, while the rest were refugees.

PARTICIPANTS BY NATIONALITY



WHO TOOK PART

- Journalists
- CSOs in feminist organising
- Security forces
- Politicians
- Students
- Refugees
- Grassroots organisers

3.2 Understanding of feminist organising

The study found that the respondents had a good understanding of feminist organising. Definitions differed from person to person, but the meaning remained the same. The results showed that most of the respondents associated feminist organising with collective effort by women to address their issues, including meaningful decision-making; a movement that is both formal and informal, bringing women together around issues that affect them; empowerment of women on how to advocate for their rights; creating spaces where women can speak, make decisions, organise collectively, and have their experiences taken seriously; individuals who advocate for the equal rights of women as men socially, politically, and economically, among others. Men were mainly looked at as allies in feminist organising.

WHAT RESPONDENTS SAID IT MEANS

- Collective effort by women to address their own issues
- Meaningful decision-making
- A formal and informal movement that brings women together
- Empowering women to advocate for their rights
- Spaces to speak, decide and organise, where experiences are taken seriously
- Equal social, political and economic rights for women and men

Men were mainly seen as allies

3.3 Activities considered to be feminist organising

The study identified activities considered feminist organising and implemented during the 2026 election period. These included: Safe Space Conversations, voter education, Monitoring/observation, Journalism/reporting, Human rights monitoring, Community mobilisation and Digital activism. On the other side, the study also revealed feminist activities that actors were undertaking amidst the election period, and these included: women's economic empowerment (women's savings groups and SACCOs); GBV prevention and referrals; girls' education programmes; women's leadership; legal aid for women; peacebuilding; women's rights to work, health, property, and safety; safe spaces, among others.

ACTIVITIES CONSIDERED FEMINIST ORGANISING 2026 election period

- Safe space conversations
- Voter education
- Monitoring and observation
- Journalism and reporting
- Human rights monitoring
- Community mobilisation
- Digital activism

ALSO UNDER WAY DURING THE ELECTION PERIOD

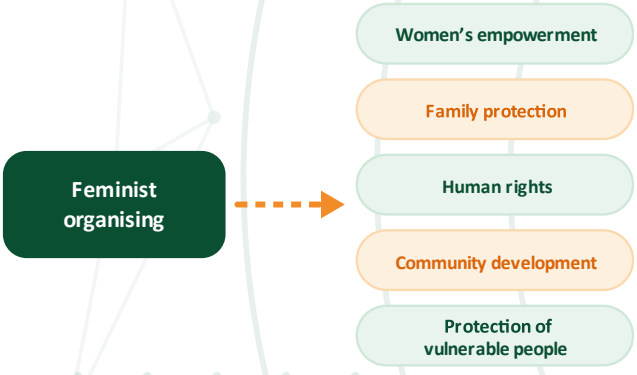
- Women's economic empowerment (savings groups and SACCOs)
- GBV prevention and referrals
- Girls' education programmes
- Women's leadership
- Legal aid for women
- Peacebuilding
- Rights to work, health, property and safety
- Safe spaces

The results further revealed that a number of women and girls doing feminist activities try to avoid the word "feminism" in their work because of its association with undermining men, encouraging LGBTQ work that is against government laws and local culture; stigmatisation or bullying by men; breaking marriages; undermining cultures and religious beliefs that men are on top of women; and negative stereotypes.

> *The community-based refugee-led groups in Bidibidi refugee settlement, they have never come out strongly to say that we are feminists or we are doing feminist work.*
> RESPONDENT, WEST NILE

However, respondents indicated that they do much of the feminist organising under cover because of these fears. They further revealed that they instead describe their work as women's empowerment, family protection, human rights, community development or protection of vulnerable people to avoid any backlash from the community and government.

THE LANGUAGE ORGANISERS USE



Often to avoid backlash from the community and government

3.4 Key Actors of feminist organising

The study documented key actors championing feminist organising in West Nile and their roles before, during and after elections. The results indicated that most CSOs' and NGOs' work focused on influencing decisions while working with government agencies that can enforce those decisions. The main categories of actors engaged in feminist organizing work in West Nile in 2026 general election included; civil society organisations (CSOs); opinion leaders; women peace advocates; mediators; women-led and women-focused organizations; youth organisations; disability organisations; refugee-led organisations; community-based organisations; women's councils; cultural/religious leaders; government agencies such as electoral commission, local governments, OPM, security organs; lawyers and legal-aid organisations; journalists and radio stations; human-rights organisations; humanitarian and development agencies supporting refugee protection and gender equality. The results also showed that the advocacy work of feminist CSOs/NGOs sometimes clashes with government powerholders due to a lack of consensus on issues such as human rights. The roles of feminist organisers in the 2026 general election ranged from incident monitoring and reporting to promoting peaceful elections, digital safety and security, women in leadership, and human rights, among other key issues.

Table 1: Feminist organisers, their roles and decision-making powers

Institution	Roles	Influence/powerful
Women's Situation Room	Receive incidents and monitor violent developments during the elections	Influential
West Nile Women Network (Women's Rights organisations)	Promote peaceful elections in West Nile	Influential
Women market vendors	Political and peace messengers, especially on violence against women during elections.	Influential
Selfless Compassion Initiative	Feminist organising and peace mediation on political issues	Influential
Women's International Peace Center	Organises peaceful mediation among aggrieved supporters and the candidates	Influential
Peace mediators	Mediate peace among aggrieved parties	Influential
Church (religious leaders)	Promotion of peaceful elections	Influential
Media houses	Provide platforms to discuss women's issues, including election violence against women.	Influential
Feminature Uganda	Organising digital safety and training	Influential
MEMPROW	Organising digital safety and training	Influential
SIHA Network	Organising digital safety and training	Influential
Arua district	Safety and security	Powerful
Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs)	Refugee inclusion and welfare	Influential/powerful
Uganda Police and justice actors	Security and safety	Powerful
Electoral Commission	Promoting women in leadership	Powerful
Cultural leaders	Promoting women in leadership	Influential
Women International Peace Center	Peace promoters	Influential
Women Democracy Network	Election organizing	Influential
Nile Girls Forum	Feminist organizing	Influential
ICS	Feminist organizing	Influential
Amani Initiative	Feminist organizing	Influential
Memprow Girls	Feminist organising, digital safety and rights	Influential
FIDA	Feminist organizing	Influential
HOST-hub	Feminist organizing	Influential
Human Rights Network for Journalism Uganda	Digital rights, gender-based violence reporting, digital safety and security training	Influential
Unwanted Witness	Digital rights, gender-based violence reporting, digital safety and security training	Influential

Institution	Roles	Influence/powerful
West Nile Press Association	Digital rights, gender-based violence reporting, digital safety and security training	Influential
Uganda Human Rights Commission	Human rights defense	Powerful
Upendo ni Baraka	Feminist organizing	Influential
Peaceful Women	Feminist organising and election activities	Influential
Centre for Peace and Democracy	Elections monitoring	Influential
Action for Rural Women's Empowerment	Rural women's welfare advocacy and girls' rights	Influential
WAID	Empower young girls in schools	Influential
Women's Effort for Inclusive Development	Empowering young girls in schools	Influential
Political organisations such as NRM, NUP, FDC, PFF	Women political leadership	Powerful/influential

TABLE 1 AT A GLANCE: INFLUENCE OF LISTED ACTORS



3.5 Partnerships and Networking

The study highlighted that feminist organisers partnered to address issues affecting women during the 2026 election. The issues that brought them together included peaceful elections that don't cause violence to women; women's political participation; voter education; access to information; freedom of expression; protection of human rights; election monitoring; and the safe use of digital technology. The results also showed that feminist organisers shifted program activities during the 2026 election period from addressing long-term program issues to addressing imminent election-related feminist issues. Activities and issues pursued during the election period included digital safety and information sharing, election intimidation, online violence, rights violations, misinformation, propaganda, and harassment. Before the elections, they worked on developmental issues such as capacity building for women's leadership and peacebuilding, peaceful coexistence in refugee settlements, voter civic education, awareness creation on violence prevention, and SRH education for child mothers. After the elections, most organisers focused on dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

The study also found that the government weakened and closed some organisations. For example, the government weakened and closed the African Centre for Media Excellence and the Human Rights Network for Journalists in Uganda. It also revealed that the feminist movement's capacity for collective action was relatively weak during the election period because not all organisations could come together around the same cause; some were engaged in other activities, while others worked independently or in silos.



Before the elections

- Capacity building for women's leadership and peacebuilding
- Peaceful coexistence in refugee settlements
- Voter and civic education
- Awareness of violence prevention
- SRH education for child mothers

During the elections

- Digital safety and information sharing
- Election intimidation
- Online violence
- Rights violations
- Misinformation and propaganda
- Harassment

After the elections

- Dialogue
- Peaceful coexistence

3.6 Spaces for women feminists

The study found that feminist organising spaces existed before, during and after the elections. During the election period, spaces shifted from online to physical meetings; meanwhile, online spaces were used only before and after the elections, when internet connectivity was restored/uninterrupted. The offline spaces used included: community meetings, women's saving group meetings, church and mosque announcements, school gatherings, Peace-co Women dialogue groups for women and girls to share experiences and learn lessons on issues such as GBV, Upendo ni Baraka dialogue platforms specifically for women with disabilities, newspapers, radio programmes and refugee settlement structures. Online platforms included WhatsApp groups, Twitter spaces, LinkedIn, Facebook, telephone calls, SMS, and the West Nile Women Network (WNWN) platform, which brings together women's rights organisations and individuals to discuss issues concerning women. The study also found that offline spaces were particularly important when internet access was interrupted, while online spaces allowed organisers to reach people quickly across geographical areas when internet connectivity was restored.

ONLINE SPACES

- WhatsApp groups
- Twitter spaces
- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- Telephone calls
- SMS
- West Nile Women Network (WNWN) platform

OFF LINE SPACES

- Community meetings
- Women's savings group meetings
- Church and mosque announcements
- School gatherings
- Peace-co Women dialogue groups
- Upendo ni Baraka dialogue platforms for women with disabilities
- Newspapers
- Radio programmes
- Refugee settlement structures

During the election, spaces shifted from online to physical meetings; online spaces were used before and after, once connectivity was restored.

3.7 Decision making

The study found that in most organisations, hierarchies were followed in decision-making. The study found that decision-making is concentrated among leaders who control finances, donor relationships, organisational information, or communication platforms, while mid-level managers and juniors are sometimes only consulted. Respondents said that people with money, phones, internet, donor connections, or access to leaders tend to make decisions. Women who are mostly affected by the level of decision-making, such as women at grassroots level, young women, women with disabilities, refugee women and gender-diverse people from marginalised backgrounds, have less influence than senior leaders and at times are not involved in the decision-making chain. Respondents also reported that leadership selection and succession processes were not transparent and that transparency was applied only to a limited extent due to the internet shutdown.

WHO HOLDS DECISION-MAKING POWER

Who decides
Leaders who control finances, donor relationships, organisational information or communication platforms: people with money, phones, internet and access to leaders

Sometimes only consulted
Mid-level managers and juniors

Least influence, sometimes outside the chain
Grassroots women, young women, women with disabilities, refugee women and gender-diverse people from marginalised backgrounds

3.8 Communication Channels

Safe and secure communication channels are essential for feminist organisers to work securely without being monitored or traced. The study showed that feminist organising groups mainly relied on a range of communication channels, including Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, and X Spaces, as well as free toll lines, while podcasts became increasingly prominent. However, podcast use remained limited to individuals and groups with the knowledge and skills to produce them. The study also found that, although digital channels were not used during the election, respondents reported using them heavily before and after elections for organising. The study further noted that while digital platforms were becoming increasingly important channels of communication among the organising members, many organising groups, particularly those living in rural areas and disabled ones, relied on physical outreaches and face-to-face engagement to receive information. Telecom platforms such as WhatsApp and telephone calls remained particularly useful for rapid communication, while radio remained important for reaching communities that have limited internet access. Face-to-face meetings remained essential for sensitive issues and for communities with limited digital access.

The study also found that women organisers own and control their devices, such as smartphones. However, in some cases, organisations own devices such as laptops, tablets, and desktops and use them for official communications, documentation, and secure storage of sensitive data, and they control them exclusively.

HOW ORGANISERS COMMUNICATED

WhatsApp and telephone calls
Useful for rapid communication

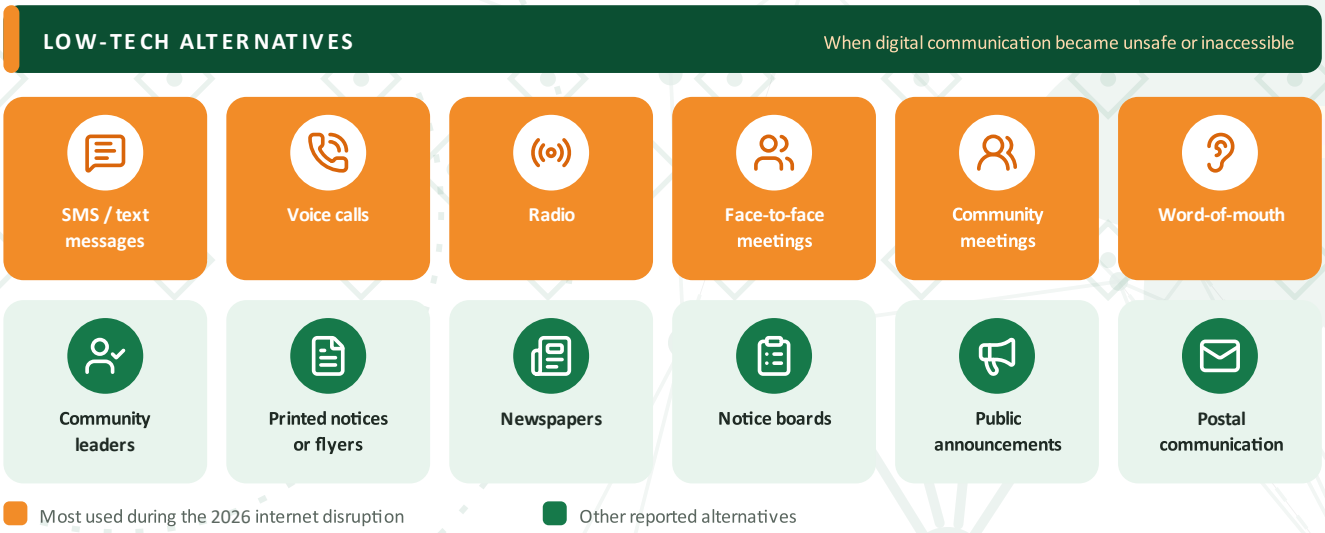
Radio
Reaches communities with limited internet access

Face-to-face meetings
Essential for sensitive issues and for communities with limited digital access

Facebook, TikTok, X Spaces and podcasts
Heavily used before and after elections; podcasts limited to those with production skills

3.9 Low technology alternatives

The study found both low-tech alternatives used by feminist organisers when digital communication became unsafe or inaccessible during the 2026 elections. The reported alternatives included SMS/text messages, Voice calls, Radio, Face-to-face meetings, community meetings, word-of-mouth communication, community leaders, printed notices or flyers, newspapers, notice boards, public announcements and postal communication. Due to internet disruption during the 2026 elections, the respondents reported mostly using SMS/text messages, Voice calls, Radio, Face-to-face meetings, community meetings, and word-of-mouth communication to organise and reach the communities.



3.9.1 Access

The study found that feminist organisers had access to digital platforms before and after the 2026 election but experienced significant disruptions during the election period due to the internet shutdown. Respondents reported being unable to access socialmedia and other internet-based platforms, disrupting activities that relied on digital connectivity, such as communication, information sharing, and coordination. In response, journalists and other organising actors resorted to sharing information through SMS following the internet shutdown. Feminist organisers also experienced frequent electricity shutdowns that rendered their phones useless and limited their internet access. The organisers further revealed that they relied only on monitored channels suchas toll-free numbers, situation rooms, and telephone calls to reach each other and could not organise freely. However, some organisers reported having internet access during the elections through a VPN, while others reported travelling to the DRC border to access the Vodacom network, since Arua is on the DRC border.

ELECTION-PERIOD ACCESS BARRIERS

Internet shutdown
Social media and internet-based platforms became inaccessible

Electricity outages
Frequent power cuts left phones useless

Monitored channels only
Toll-free numbers, situation rooms and phone calls

Workarounds
VPNs; travelling to the DRC border to reach the Vodacom network

3.9.2 Inclusion

The study revealed that inclusion was highly practiced by feminist organising groups before, during and after the 2026 election, highlighting the importance of ensuring that different groups were able to participate in election-related information sharing and engagement. The Ugandan electoral laws provide for everyone, including special groups such as people with disabilities, women, the elderly, and RWC in the settlements, among others. The study also found that refugee communities were excluded from Uganda's general election, though some refugees expressed interest in participating in and supporting candidates they preferred.

> *"The Ugandan laws bar refugees from participating in national politics and voting and hence restricting digital feminist organising online, hence creating a climate of surveillance, censorship, and structural exclusion, one respondent said".*
> RESPONDENT, WEST NILE

The study also found that the election organisation for refugees differs slightly from Uganda's general election organisation. Respondents reported that the refugees are given very limited time to campaign, the election is rushed, restricted, and space for expression is limited, mistrust among different tribes is high, and there is limited information about the election, leaving potential women out to compete.

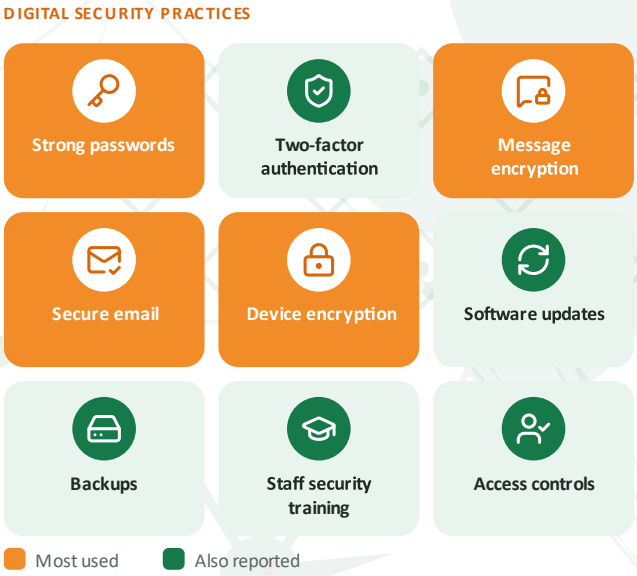
3.9.3 Digital Inequality

Refugee and host communities often face the same common inequalities, although refugees have protection and legal circumstances. Respondents revealed that competition over resources and unequal access to services sometimes create inequalities for women aspiring to leadership positions in host communities and among refugees. The study highlighted that refugee women held few positions in the RWC 111 structure because they lacked information about refugee elections. However, the study also found that the inequalities faced by refugees and host communities strengthened their collaboration on shared issues. For example, collaboration between refugee-led organisations like RED-NET and host-community organisations, particularly on GBV prevention, protection, and community mobilisation, has proven to be an effective way to address some of these inequalities.

3.9.4 Digital Security

The digital, physical, psychosocial, legal, reputational, economic, and organisational risks faced by feminists during the 2026 election period included financial barriers, the rising commercialisation of politics, psychological warfare, especially against women leaders when harassed online, anxiety, and isolation burnout. Some of the respondents reported slow internet connectivity that affected their operations.

The actors managed misinformation, surveillance, harassment, or digital security risks before, during and after elections through methods such as using strong passwords, two-factor authentication, encryption of messages, secure email, device encryption, regular software updates, backups, staff security training, access controls, talking in person, and using WhatsApp, among others, whereas grassroots women were left to the mercy of the government since they do not have adequate knowledge of smartphone data protection, which posed a big risk. Respondents reported mostly using strong passwords, message encryption, secure email, and device encryption as their main practices for managing digital security risks.



3.9.5 Threat Landscape

The study recorded information that feminist organisers considered safe to share publicly, privately, or face-to-face. Common information respondents considered safe to share included personal identification details such as names, home addresses, phone numbers, and locations. Meanwhile, information they could not easily share included financial information, passwords or account credentials, and internal organisational plans. The study found that feminist organisers protected their privacy and strengthened the security of their communications during election periods by changing communication channels, using SMS or voice calls, communicating face to-face, reducing online activity, and increasing account security, among other measures.

Considered safe to share

- Names
- Home addresses
- Phone numbers
- Locations

Hard to share

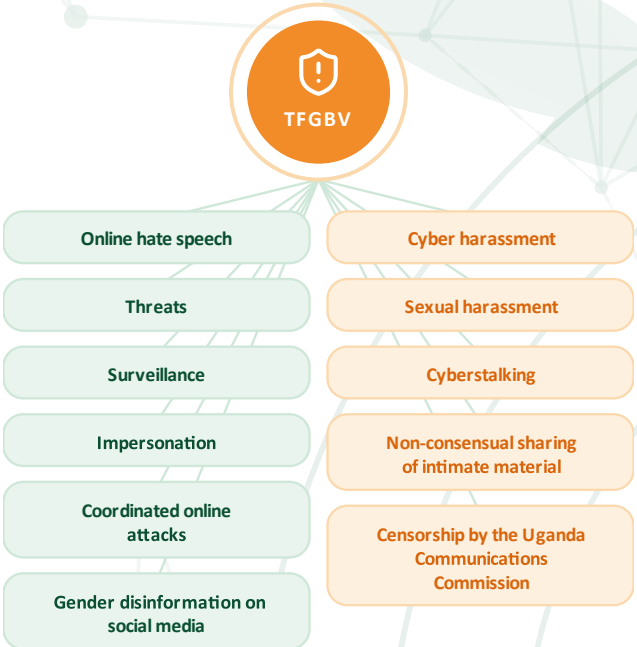
- Financial information
- Passwords and account credentials
- Internal organisational plans

HOW THEY PROTECTED PRIVACY

Changing channels, using SMS or voice calls, meeting face-to-face, reducing online activity and increasing account security

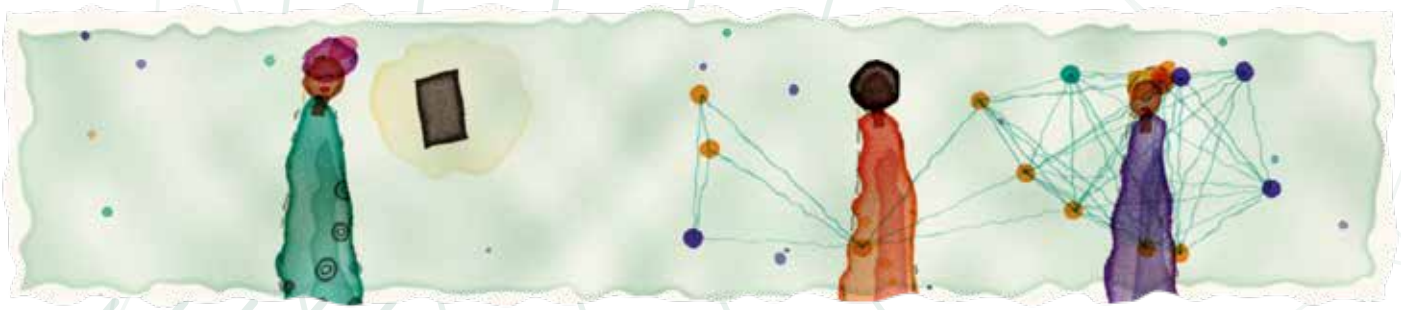
3.10 Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)

The study revealed that women in politics and feminist organisers experienced both digital and physical risks. The intersection of political tension and gender discrimination heavily increased safety risks for women, people with Disabilities, and feminist organisers. The women and other similar actors faced online hate speech, cyber harassment, threats, sexual harassment, surveillance, cyberstalking, impersonation, nonconsensual sharing of intimate material and coordinated online attacks; censorship by the Uganda Communications Commission; and gender disinformation through social media platforms such as Facebook regarding female candidates who competed with men. Some respondents reported lacking the skills to protect themselves from TFGBV. The respondents further revealed that women politicians experienced sexualized narratives based on their gender and patriarchal stereotypes that women are unfit for high-stakes decision-making offices, especially for women who contested with men for the various positions.



3.11 Laws, Institutions and Accountability

The respondents reported that Ugandan electoral laws do not provide sufficient protection (freedom of expression, freedom of association, peaceful assembly, access to information, women's political participation, Online advocacy, Civic education) for feminist organisers. The results showed that Ugandan electoral laws both restricted and enabled feminist organising. On the positive side, the laws and institutional frameworks enabled citizens' civic participation during the 2026 election, which feminist organisers used as a platform to advocate for rights communities. The laws also enabled women leaders to participate in the political space, which is a feminist issue. On the other hand, the laws and institutional frameworks restricted feminist organising online, especially when UCC restricted communication and mobile money transactions during the election period. Organisers reported having no capacity to organise online and had to rely on a few monitored platforms, such as toll-free and situation room, to reach one another. Respondents reported that they had to seek permission from the authorities to hold public meetings, advocacy or mobilisation activities. Others reported that asset freezing in commercial banks of targeted civic groups, halting operations, staff payment and grassroots electoral support critical to feminist organising were common among the organisers and restricted their activities. Electoral laws also dictated who could legally run advocacy campaigns, and mandatory registration requirements for civil society organisations (CSOs) limited non-registered grassroots feminist groups' ability to run political activities or public voter-awareness campaigns.



LAWS THAT ENABLED

- Enabled citizens' civic participation, which organisers used as a platform to advocate for rights
- Enabled women leaders to participate in the political space

LAWS THAT RESTRICTED

- UCC restricted communication and mobile money during the election period
- Permission needed from authorities for public meetings, advocacy and mobilisation
- Asset freezing of targeted civic groups in commercial banks
- Laws dictated who could run advocacy campaigns; mandatory CSO registration limited unregistered grassroots groups

3.12 Elections, Technology and Civic Participation

The study highlighted that technology was used during elections for voter education, sharing election information, communication, mobilisation, monitoring and reporting among organisers. Feminist organisers used WhatsApp, radio and mobile phones to share information, mobilise communities, promote peace and report incidents. The Electoral Commission incorporated biometric voter-verification technology into the 2025/26 electoral process, illustrating the increasing importance of technology in elections. Some respondents reported using webinars and Zoom for election training and meetings, and for coordinating rapid responses during and after the elections.

However, during the internet shutdown, politicians used local motorcycle transporters (boda boda), informal groups like market women vendors, and safe spaces to pass information; however, technology itself created risks because the same online platforms were used to spread misinformation and exposed organisers to harassment.



3.13 Collective Care, Resilience and Agency

The results showed that feminist organisers adopted the situation room, established community-led security, and used individual or collective care, resilience, referral, and rapid-response practices. Feminist Organisers used trusted networks, emergency contacts, peer support, counselling, referrals and regular communication to support each other during crises. They also used practices such as maintaining emergency contacts, working through trusted community leaders, having referral pathways for GBV survivors, maintaining communication trees, identifying safe meeting places, travelling in groups when necessary, documenting incidents safely and knowing where to obtain legal, medical and psychosocial support as the main community-led security, individual or collective care, resilience, referral, and rapid-response practices.

The study found that referral systems were in place for services such as SGBV, medical services, legal assistance, and child protection, among others. Initiatives such as legal and first aid, especially for the survivors of GBV and election violence-related cases, were put in place by actors. Institutions such as child protection structures, the police, the Federation of Women Lawyers – Uganda (FIDA Uganda), the Uganda Law Society, and REDEEM received frequent referrals during the election period on issues such as GBV and child protection. The agencies used early warning systems to detect and address challenges, secured documentation, carried out digital security training and digital audits, mapped resources, and created emergency funds.

- Trusted networks and community leaders
- Emergency contacts
- Peer support and counselling
- Communication trees

Collective care
and rapid response

- Safe meeting places and travelling in groups
- Documenting incidents safely
- Referral pathways: SGBV, medical, legal and child protection
- Early warning, digital audits and emergency funds

RECEIVING FREQUENT REFERRALS DURING THE ELECTION PERIOD
Child protection structures · Police · FIDA Uganda · Uganda Law Society · REDEEM



CHAPTER 04

Discussion of the Results

4.1 Mapping feminist actors, networks, organising spaces, communication channels and movement relationships

Across the African continent, from pre-colonial times to the contemporary era, women have organised to advance their interests in social, cultural, political, and economic domains through similar interventions. As Pereira (2017) found, women organised in similar activities during the 2026 election period to defend their political space. However, feminist organising comes with consequences for most women and girls. This study found that women and girls engaged in feminist organising avoided referring to themselves as feminists because of the societal consequences and backlash. Relatedly, Maartje, Kate, & Lamme (2017) found that many women who accept the basic tenets of feminist ideology are reluctant to call themselves feminists, which is problematic because feminist self-identification is related to a variety of negative outcomes.

This study found that in West Nile, many feminist actors challenged the stereotype of male dominance, especially in politics. However, the results indicated that their roles in influencing government and societal decisions have continued, often bringing them into conflict with government powerholders, especially in key areas such as human rights.

Successful networking has long been described as critical for women who want to break the glass ceiling, as it can increase their opportunities. The same concept was also adopted by the feminist organisers in West Nile during the 2026 election. The resultsof this study showed that the organisers achieved several milestones during the 2026 election while working on issues such as peaceful elections, women's political participation, voter education, access to information, freedom of expression, and protection of human rights, among others. Ávila (1997) argued that feminists have formed partnerships within the feminist movement to advance their interests. Ávila (1997 reported that allies are fundamental for democracy, yet the feminist movement is still trying to win allies to its own causes.

4.2 Access to devices, electricity, connectivity, data, digital skills and secure communications

Digital technologies have played a transformative role in feminist activism, facilitating mobilisation, raising awareness at scale, and promoting new forms of civic participation. Digital technologies enable the creation of safe and inclusive discussion spaces where women can share experiences, denounce abuses and formulate collective strategies to confront violence and discrimination. However, women still face several challenges that restrict their full public participation in many areas. Carvalho (2025) reported that factors such as gender prejudices, stereotypes, restrictive social and cultural norms, limited mobility, domestic responsibilities, overload of care-related activities, and limited free time continue to limit women's active participation in civic activities. In response, feminist organisers have explored different platforms to strengthen their participation in public affairs. This study found feminist organising spaces that existed before, during and after the elections. The study also found that offline spaces were particularly important when internet access was interrupted, while online spaces allowed organisers to reach people quickly across geographical areas once internet connectivity was restored.

Despite considerable efforts to address decision-making gaps in many organisations, gender inequality remains a major gap. The results showed that decision-making remains highly centralised around leaders who control finances, donor relationships, organisational information, or communication platforms, while mid-level managers and juniors are sometimes only consulted. Respondents said that people with money, phones, internet access, donor connections, or access to leaders tend to make decisions. Women who are mostly affected by the level of decision making such as women at the grassroots level, young women, women with disabilities, refugee women and gender-diverse people from marginalised backgrounds, have less influence than senior leaders and at times are not involved in the decision-making chain.

George (2025) found that despite the benefits of involving everyone in decision-making, women still face significant barriers in the decision-making chain. Cultural norms and traditional gender roles often restrict women's involvement in decision-making, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (George, 2025), and they are often discouraged from taking leadership roles, and their contributions are overlooked in formal decision-making structures.

Feminist organisers use a combination of digital platforms, interpersonal networks, traditional media, and community-based channels during elections to mobilise voters, shift public opinion, and counter patriarchal narratives. Women organisers have increasingly needed to organise online to be heard. The results showed that feminist organising groups used communication channels such as Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, X Spaces and toll-free lines to organise themselves, regardless of the period. The study further noted that while digital platforms were becoming increasingly important channels of communication among the organising members, many organising groups, particularly those living in rural areas and disabled ones, relied on physical outreaches and face-to-face engagement to receive information. Similarly, Olowu (2024) found that rural women were highly exposed to and conversant with the different traditional communication forms used to mobilise them for PVC registration, and that these methods were effective and significantly influenced women's participation in the exercise. Although rural women have used traditional media effectively to conduct their activities, their transition to digital spaces remains a major challenge. Khotimah (2025) found that *cultural and technological barriers limit women's access to digital inheritance, despite their growing economic contributions.*

4.3 Refugee and host-community feminist organisers combine online, offline and low-technology approaches

Low-technology alternatives provide feminist organisers, refugee and host communities, and women practical ways to maintain communication, organise collectively, and support one another when digital technologies are inaccessible, unsafe, or unreliable. These approaches can help to mitigate corporate surveillance, digital exclusion, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence while maintaining autonomy, safety, and mutual aid. This study found low-tech alternatives used by feminist organisers when digital communication became unsafe orinaccessible during the 2026 elections. Studies have argued that offline or low-tech alternatives have provided real solutions for women to organise in rural and underserved areas, especially in communities where internet connectivity, electricity and access to digital devices may be limited. Such alternatives can help sustain organising activities during internet shutdowns and other disruptions to digital communication. However, their effectiveness depends on the local context, the sensitivity of the information being shared, and the safety of the individuals involved.

Other studies have argued that increased access to technology does not automatically translate into meaningful empowerment, particularly when structural inequalities and unequal power relations remain unaddressed. Feminist critiques have challenged the assumption that incorporating women as consumers of digital technologies is, in itself, a pathway to economic and social empowerment. Instead, meaningful digital inclusion requires attention to the political and economic structures underpinning digital technologies, including concentrated corporate power, data extraction, surveillance, and unequal access to technological resources. Digital technology cannot be positioned as a tool for empowerment without challenging the political economy that digital capitalism thrives on.

> ***Digital technology cannot be positioned as a tool for empowerment without challenging the political economy that digital capitalism thrives on.***
> FROM THE DISCUSSION

4.4 Risks Associated with Digital, Physical, Psychosocial, Legal, Reputational, Economic and Organisational Risks

Women and feminist movements face a complex landscape regarding access, inclusion, and safety on digital platforms. While the internet offers tools for mobilisation, economic empowerment, and self-expression, systemic and structural barriers often limit equal participation. Despite these limitations, this study found that feminist organisers had access to digital platforms before and after the 2026 election but reported political and legal disruptions to access during the election period. This disruption affected women

organisers in grassroots areas more than those who live in urban areas. Exclusion is deeper for marginalised groups, including women with disabilities, rural women, and LBTQ+ individuals, who face compounded economic, social, and physical hurdles when trying to occupy online spaces (Jeng, 2020). This exclusion is also compounded by government monitoring that scares women organisers. This study found that organisers relied on monitored channels such as toll-free numbers, situation rooms, and telephone calls to reach each other, and could not organise freely because government agencies monitored these channels.

Digitalisation and social media have supported women's movements in building feminist solidarity. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok have become women's primary sources for organising. However, these platforms also pose digital security risks that may affect women's participation in public issues. In agreement with this study, Luna & Whetstone (2024) found that aspects of online organising are harmed by the state's ability to surveil, disrupt and/or co-opt online activism, which further widens the gender digital gap, wherein more men than women have access to the cybersphere. As documented in this study, barriers such as financial barriers, the rising commercialisation of politics, psychological warfare, especially against women leaders when harassed online, anxiety, and isolation burnout of women have increased the digital gaps. However, women organisers have also worked to counter the digital insecurity affecting their activities. For example, this study found that actorsmanaged misinformation, surveillance, harassment, or digital security risks before, during and after elections through methods such as using strong passwords, two-factor authentication, encryption of messages, secure email, device encryption, regular software updates, backups, staff security training, access controls, talking in person, and using WhatsApp, among others.

4.5 Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)

Digital technology offers unprecedented opportunities and can enable gender equality and women's equal enjoyment of human rights. Digital connectivity has delivered powerful tools that give women and girls greater access to information, education, expression, and mobilisation. While technology has come with a lot of benefits for women, digital abuse targets women and girls, as well as individuals at the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination, including LGBTQI+ individuals, women in public or political life, human rights defenders, and women and girls with disabilities. This study revealed that women in politics and feminist organisers experienced both digital and physical risks due to political tension and gender discrimination that heavily increased safety risks for women, people with Disabilities, and feminist organisers during the 2026 election. In relation to this study, UNHR, 2(026) reported that new technologies are increasingly being misused to fuel and perpetrate gender based violence. Technology facilitated gender based violence is one of the fastest-growing forms of violence against women and girls. This study found that women and other similar actors faced online hate speech, cyber harassment, threats, sexual harassment, surveillance, cyberstalking, impersonation, nonconsensual sharing of intimate material and coordinated online attacks during the 2026 general election.

> ***Technology-facilitated gender-based violence is one of the fastest-growing forms of violence against women and girls.***
> UNHR, 2026

4.6 Laws, Institutions and Accountability

Feminist movements have historically pushed for women's suffrage and the right to run for office, transforming male-dominated legislatures into more inclusive bodies. Globally, feminist movements clash with government policies and laws amid systemic rollbacks of bodily autonomy, legal protections, and civil rights. Reports from organisations like UN Women emphasise that no country has achieved full legal equality. This friction plays out across distinct policy battlegrounds worldwide. For example, this study found that Ugandan electoral laws do not provide sufficient protection (freedom of expression, freedom of association, peaceful assembly, access to information, women's political participation, online advocacy, civic education) for feminist organisers. During the 2026 election, electoral law restricted internet use, affecting feminist organising. Organisers reported having no capacity to organise online and had to rely on a few monitored platforms, such as toll-free and situation room, to reach one another. Respondents reported that they had to seek permission from the authorities to hold public meetings, advocacy or mobilisation activities. However, laws and institutional frameworks enabled citizens' participation during the

2026 election, which feminist organisers used as a platform to advocate for rights communities.

4.7 Elections, Technology and Civic Participation

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can enhance citizen advocacy and engagement and increase government transparency and accountability. In many countries, ICT has been deployed to enhance communication and improve access to important information, shaping civic participation and elections by expanding access to information, enabling real-time monitoring, and supporting digital organisation (CIPESA, 2012). The results showed that technology was used during elections for voter education, sharing election information, communication, mobilisation, and monitoring and reporting among organisers. Similarly, CIPESA (2012) noted that ICT tools were used broadly for campaigning, tallying results, monitoring the actions of political groups and the electoral body, for civic education, and for activism during the Ugandan election period. Worryingly, many Ugandans do not participate in civic matters, thereby undermining efforts to promote transparency in the conduct of public affairs. On top of that, the technology itself is also used to spread misinformation and expose organisers to harassment.

4.8 Collective Care, Resilience and Agency

> ***Election periods in Uganda do not simply test democratic institutions; they test the bodies and resilience of the women who serve and defend those institutions.***
>
> FROM THE DISCUSSION

Election periods in Uganda do not simply test democratic institutions; they test the bodies and resilience of the women who serve and defend those institutions. Election periods often feature heightened state and public surveillance, internet shutdowns, and targeted online harassment against women in civic and political spaces. Because of these challenges, women and feminist organisers have developed collective care to counter some of these attacks. The study found that organisers relied on trusted networks, emergency contacts, peer support, counselling, referrals and regular communication to support each other during crises; maintaining emergency contacts, working through trusted community leaders, having referral pathways for GBV survivors, maintaining communication trees, identifying safe meeting places, travelling in groups when necessary, documenting incidents safely and knowing where to obtain legal, medical and psychosocial support were the main community-led security, individual or collective care, resilience, referral, and rapid response practices, among others. Other studies reported that collective care strategies involve encrypted peer-communication networks, digital security training, and rapid-response safety circles.



CHAPTER
05 Lessons learned

LESSON 01

Women's participation requires more than simply encouraging women to vote or contest. Women need access to information, financial and organisational resources, safe communication, protection from violence and harassment, and meaningful opportunities to influence decisions.

LESSON 02

Digital technology is now an important part of civic participation; therefore, digital inclusion must go hand in hand with digital safety and information literacy.

LESSON 03

Inclusion was well practised, highlighting the importance of ensuring that different groups can participate in election-related information sharing and engagement, and this needs to be upheld in the coming election. However, the grassroots groups have notbeen fully integrated into digital organising.

LESSON 04

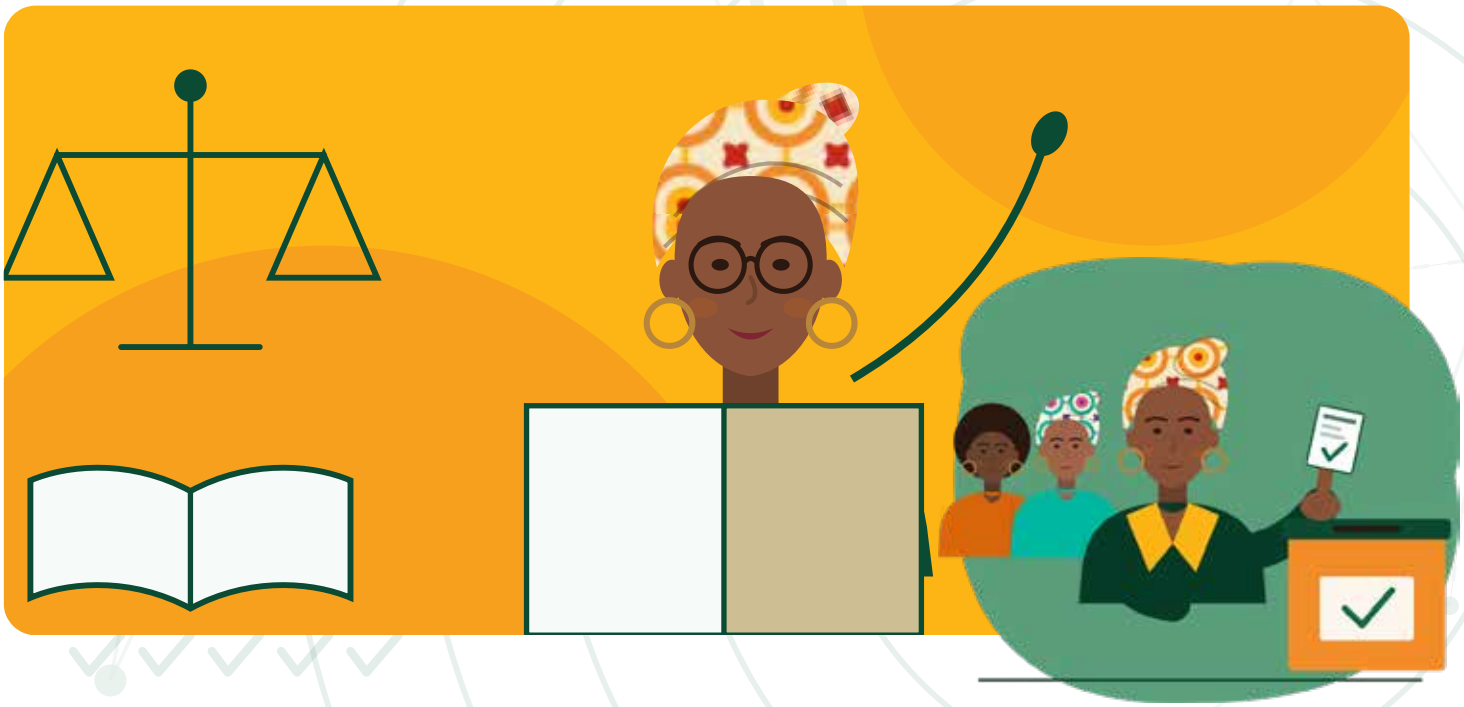
Another key lesson was the importance of strengthening digital safety precautions. These include using strong passwords, avoiding unverified links, protecting personal and organisational data, and regularly backing up important information and files.

LESSON 05

By 2026, feminist organisers need increased investment in digital infrastructure, equipment, software, staff capacity, and financial preparedness to protect themselves, since the 2026 election internet interruption affected them badly.

LESSON 06

Most women doing feminist organising are not free in associating with the word feminism and prefer to do the work without necessarily associating with it due to stereotypes that come with feminism.



CHAPTER
06 Recommendation

FOR GOVERNMENT

01 Enhance Women's Participation: Ensure that information about electoral processes is disseminated clearly and effectively, particularly to women in marginalised communities. Develop community outreach programs that educate women about their electoral rights and the voting process.

02 Protect Against Violence: Implement and enforce stricter measures against violence and harassment during elections. This includes establishing safe spaces and providing support systems for women who experience violence or intimidation while participating in the electoral process.

03 Accessibility of Complaint Mechanisms: Create accessible and user-friendly mechanisms for reporting incidents of harassment or violence during elections, ensuring that these mechanisms are well-publicised and approachable for all women, especially those from marginalised backgrounds.

04 Strengthen Digital Safety: Promote digital safety awareness through targeted campaigns and workshops, equipping women with the knowledge to navigate online spaces safely and effectively. This can include partnerships with tech organisations to provide training on digital tools and resources.

05 Implement Political Reforms: Actively implement the proposed reforms from political parties since 2011 to ensure a violence-free election environment. This includes reviewing existing laws and ensuring compliance with international standards regarding women's participation in politics.

FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOS) AND FEMINATURE

01 Broaden Awareness Among Men: Develop community programs aimed at engaging men and boys to foster understanding and support for feminist organising. This can include workshops, dialogues, and awareness campaigns in refugee and rural communities where feminist movements are less recognised.

02 Focus on Last-Mile Communities: Shift the emphasis of organising efforts from urban areas to last-mile communities by conducting training, workshops, and awareness campaigns tailored to the specific needs and contexts of these populations.

03 Economic Empowerment Projects: Design and implement economic empowerment programs targeting grassroots women organisers. These initiatives should focus on providing women with access to technology (e.g., smartphones, tablets) and digital skills training to strengthen their ability to organise and advocate online.

04 Establish Women's Situation Rooms: Create or strengthen Women's Situation Rooms at the district level across the West Nile region. These rooms should serve as local hubs for coordination, information sharing, monitoring, and quick response to incidents affecting women during elections.

05 Collaborate with Local Governments and Communities: Work closely with local government institutions and communities to create awareness programs that promote democratic participation and support for women's rights. This collaboration can build a more inclusive environment for feminist organising.



COLLABORATION ACROSS DIFFERENT SECTORS

01 Public-Private Partnerships: Encourage collaboration among government, private, and civil society organisations to develop comprehensive strategies to empower women in both digital and physical spaces. This can include technology companies contributing resources for digital training programs.

02 Health and Safety Initiatives: Partner with health organisations to ensure that mental and physical health support is available for women participating in electoral processes, particularly in coordinated response efforts during elections.

03 Investment in Technology Access: Advocate for investment in infrastructure that enhances digital connectivity in rural and refugee communities, helping to bridge the digital divide that currently impedes grassroots women's involvement in organising.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can create a more inclusive environment that supports feminist organising, enhances women's participation in political processes, and addresses the challenges marginalised women face in Uganda, particularly in the context of the 2026 general elections.



CHAPTER
07 Conclusion

The study concludes that feminist organisers worked in networks and engaged in extensive collaboration during the 2026 election period. Most organisers adjusted their work plans to accommodate election-period tensions so women's issues were addressed during the election period. However, most women and girls in feminist organising still fear being associated with feminist work because of community backlash.

The study concludes that women organisers faced digital and physical risks and harm during the 2026 election period. However, through collective care and sustained capacity-building, the organisers developed resilience practices to withstand these risks and harms.

Legal and institutional frameworks both restricted and enabled feminist organising practices before, during, and after the elections. Electoral laws promoted women's leadership and other women's organising during the election period. For example, the study found that many women were able to contest and support campaigns for fellow women, among others. On the other hand, laws were also used to target opposition women leaders and restrict their full participation in the elections.

Technology was important in organising Uganda's 2026 general election. A number of women organised activities online through platforms. The Government of Uganda used technology to conduct the election and other associated processes.

The study found that women and girls developed collective care and resilience while organising their feminist activities. Women and girls exhibited collective care both online and offline.



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