

## **Digital Violence Workshop at TED University**

### **“We are not all equal in the cyber world”**

**20 November 2021**

The workshop, which was organized for female students studying at TED University and facilitated by Nurcihan Temur and Pınar İlkiz, started with a discussion on the concept of "gender". Temur explained the subject as "Life is a theater stage and we are asked to play the roles attributed to us on the stage, and when we refuse, we are kicked out of the stage". She then talked about the types of gender-based violence. It was added that digital violence, which is one of the types of gender-based violence and which has become more visible with the increase in the use of technology and social media, is relatively common and intense. At this point, Temur stated that not everyone is equal in the cyber world and that some social groups, especially women, girls, LGBTI+ individuals, and refugees, are more likely to be exposed to digital violence. Temur added that to see the reflections of gender inequality in the cyber world, the comments made to female MPs and male MPs on Twitter can be compared. Temur also emphasized that digital violence can occur independently of the relationships established and the place one is in; for example, violent behavior can be directed from someone living in another country and this situation increases the risk of exposure to violence. Digital violence was classified as cyberstalking (following people with a negative intention), cyber harassment (interacting in a way that creates a feeling of discomfort and insecurity in the person, sharing sexual content, sending hate speech and discriminatory messages), using images taken with or without consent for threatening purposes within the scope of visual sexual harassment (in a relationship) and breach of privacy (seizing e-mail addresses and passwords and using them against the other party). Temur stated that the negative effects of digital violence on people are quite large and can cause a heavy feeling of insecurity, self-blame, depression, and suicide, due to the possibility of personal information and visuals being attributed to the world by exceeding the boundaries of established relationships and the place they are in.

### **So, What Can Be Done?**

#### **“Create Your Little Barriers”**

Temur stated that after being exposed to digital violence, it is important to accept that it is violence, to avoid self-blame, to share the situation with someone close to us, to search for application mechanisms, to seek psychological support if necessary, and to seek counseling from the relevant authorities. At the same time, it was added that disclosure can also be an effective method. İlkiz, at this point, underlined that it is very important to be prepared for the risk of counter-litigation and to seek counseling from a feminist lawyer if the disclosure is to be made. Expressing that some individual

measures can be taken against digital violence, İlkiz listed these measures as follows: Being aware of the fact that solving personality tests on the Internet means transmitting a lot of information about ourselves to the other party, not using information about ourselves when determining passwords, not connecting different digital platforms and applications, checking the device's permission status of third-party platforms and applications, asking "Is there a need for this sharing" before making a post that has the potential to reveal the location or a special situation that can be used against us, adjusting its settings, being aware of the fact that platforms and applications that offer free services request relatively much personal information in return, showing the paper on which the number is written instead of verbally transmitting the phone number to the cashier, enabling two-step verification feature in e-mail accounts, creating a detailed complaint request instead of "spam" digital violent behavior on social media, logging out of personal accounts after using a foreign computer, and clearing the search history. Stating that digital violence can be prevented with such small barriers, İlkiz underlined that the solution can only be realized beyond individual steps.