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Navigating Women's Safety in The Metaverse



Dear TWF Friends,

Trigger warning: This article contains references to sexual assault which some readers may find distressing.

There's a lot of excitement about the concept of the metaverse, a network of 3D virtual worlds that are so realistic they could blend our physical and digital lives. Tech companies say it could make society fairer by removing barriers and enhancing our abilities. However, it's also critical to look at the gaps in protections that leave users vulnerable, particularly women who comprise the majority of in person and online sexual violence victims.

We have long known that digital spaces are also rife with harmful behaviours. A 2021 survey by the Equal Opportunities Commission sheds light on the gravity of online sexual harassment, with 1 in 6 individuals, particularly women aged 18-34, reporting such experiences. As technology becomes more immersive, the ever-expanding and evolving metaverse amplifies the need for safeguarding measures, particularly for women and girls who could face a heightened risk of sexual harassment or assault in this new digital environment, which we have already seen instances of in Asia and elsewhere.

[Here are three ways you can act to ensure a safer digital space:](#)

- 1. Adopt Comprehensive Safeguarding Practices:** Consider the full range of online abuse in [discussions about women's safety in the metaverse](#). Understand that emotional and verbal abuse are significant forms of harm that should not be overlooked.
- 2. Shape an Ethical and Inclusive Metaverse:** Stay informed about potential issues such as the digital divide, privacy concerns, and the misuse of technology. Engage in discussions, provide feedback, and hold technology companies accountable for creating a metaverse that benefits everyone.
- 3. Support Victim Assistance Resources:** Raise awareness about existing victim assistance [resources](#) available for survivors of sexual assault in the metaverse. Share information about [helplines](#), [counselling services](#), or organisations that specialise in supporting

victims of online abuse. Encourage survivors to seek help and provide them with the necessary resources to navigate the process of reporting and recovering from such incidents.

[Read More](#)

UPCOMING EVENT

20th Anniversary Gala Dinner 2024 - Save the Date!

We are excited to be hosting our 20th Anniversary Gala Dinner sponsored by Title Sponsor, **Bloomberg**, on November 6, 2024, at the Regent Hong Kong. We hope you can mark this special occasion in your calendar. More details to follow!



For information on sponsorship opportunities, please contact Phoebe.Ho@twfhk.org or Development@twfhk.org.

PROGRAMME UPDATES

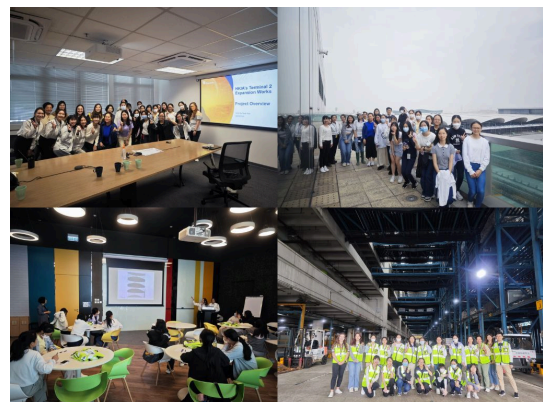


Young Allies: The Future Starts Now

On April 13, our Young Allies, together with their mentors who are our Male Allies, joined the fourth Young Allies Programme workshop. The workshop focused on the theme "The Future Starts Now", aiming to explore the journey towards positive change. During the session, the participants engaged in discussions about putting allyship values into action in various aspects of life, including love, work and learning. They also had the opportunity to practice allyship through real-life dialogue scenarios. A huge thank you to Ernst & Young for hosting us and to Dramatic Difference for facilitating the session.

Girls Go Tech Programme: Visit to HACTL and HK International Airport

On March 28, we co-organised a visit with Jardine Matheson for GGT participants to explore the expansion project at Hong Kong International Airport Terminal 2 and Hong Kong Air Cargo Terminals (HACTL). The day began with a workshop led by Gammon Construction, focusing on construction engineering technology and the role of STEM in creating greener and safer structures. Female engineers shared insights into various career prospects within the industry. At HACTL, participants witnessed the practical application of STEM in goods transfer, including live animals, highlighting Hong Kong's global trade landscape. A huge thanks to Jardines, Gammon, HACTL, and the volunteers for their support in making this educational visit a success.





Girls Go Tech Programme: Arup Workshop

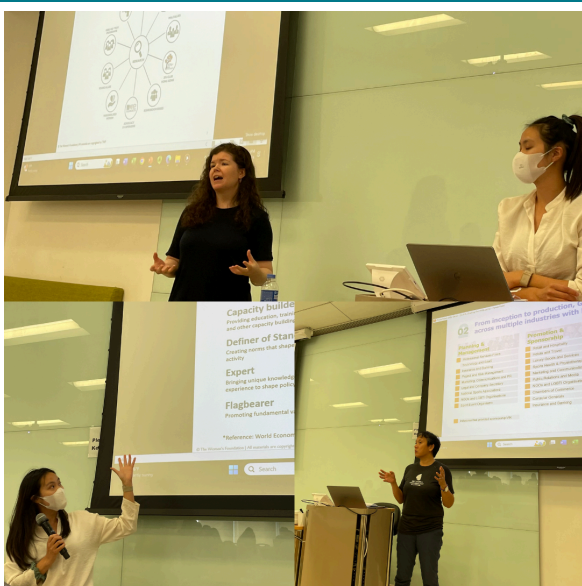
On March 27, GGT participants took part in a workshop co-organised by Arup. Participants learnt the ropes of sustainability and how digital technology plays a role in shaping a sustainable future. Guided by incredible volunteers from diverse backgrounds, they explored innovative solutions, using their school environment as a canvas. Together, they brainstormed student-friendly designs, focusing on human-centred and sustainable approaches to tackle real-world issues. Participants were then introduced to design thinking techniques and smart digital tools, which helped them dig deeper into how technologies can elevate user experiences in green solutions. Huge thanks to Arup for their invaluable support!

Gender Equality & Inclusion Working Group: Psychological Safety

On April 18, we held a productive virtual session on psychological safety as part of our third cycle of our Gender Equality & Inclusion Working Group, which brings together business leads, HR and DEI heads from our Advocate-level corporate partners to share learnings and exchange best practices. Participants discussed the different components of team psychological safety, what teams look like when these components are missing, and discussed practices in which leaders and managers can more effectively cultivate a psychologically safe workplace. A huge thank you to Mônica Zionede Hall | FELIZ Consulting for leading the session.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT



TWF speaks at HKU on gender studies application & NGO impact

On April 10, Lisa Moore, Senior Director of Research and Advocacy, and Désirée Fong, Communications and Advocacy Senior Officer, were guest speakers at the University of Hong Kong's Gender Studies department. They spoke alongside Lisa Lam | Co-Chair of Gay Games Hong Kong, where they discussed the role of NGOs and how gender studies can be applied to create tangible social impact in the broader society. Thank you, Dr. Anna Marie Bautista | professor in Gender Studies, American Studies, and Comparative Literature at the University of Hong Kong for the invitation!

IN THE COMMUNITY

2024 COMMUNITY BUSINESS AWARDS

Celebrating DE&I and wellbeing
best practices in Asia



Nomination Deadline

FRI, 3 MAY 2024

NOMINATE NOW

2024 Community Business Awards Nominations - 1 week to go!

TWF is delighted to be a supporting organisation of the 2024 Community Business Awards, which celebrate DE&I and wellbeing practices in Asia. Community Business have expanded to 23 awards for the 2024 Awards in the following sub-categories: Creating Social Impact (a sub-category for community organisations and leaders), General DE&I, LGBT+ Inclusion, Wellbeing and India. The nomination deadline is **Friday, May 3**, with a view to announcing the winners in a ceremony in **September**. We encourage you to submit nominations for the Awards and showcase your efforts on DE&I and wellbeing in Asia.

ON OUR RADAR

The Good

- KlimaSeniorinnen: Meet the older women suing Switzerland to demand climate action (Reuters)

The Challenging

- China's gender gap widening post-pandemic, with 'she-cession' still real threat to economy (SCMP)

The Unexpected

- Sexual harassment allegations against LGBTQ-friendly pastor in Hong Kong raise questions over power dynamics (HKFP)

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