

# Promoting tech for good- the Womanity Award

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LSE MSc students **Dana Vigran** and **Tara Bell** reflect on their experience working on an internship at LSE with the [Womanity Foundation](#) on their Womanity Award for the Prevention of Violence Against Women.

Working with the Womanity Foundation in a group of LSE students gave us the opportunity to observe, participate and learn from the extensive selection process: narrowing down thirteen applications to four finalists, to the eventual announcement of the winner of the award: [Take Back the Tech](#), created by the Association for Progressive Communications, and replicated in Mexico by La Sandia Digital and Luchadoras.



One of our main tasks was to undertake a thorough overview of all of the [shortlisted organisations](#) and the multiplicity of ways in which they have used technology in order to address violence against women. These ranged from online media campaigns to training in digital security, and from a soccer-themed video game promoting positive gender behaviours, to an app that allows users to create a safe 'action plan' for leaving a potentially abusive partner. We learned about the initiatives that have been created in countries all over the world that are used by hundreds of thousands of women, and are all successful in their own right. However, the nature of the exercise meant we had to view the organisations in relation to one another, comparing and contrasting them, which gave us an insight into which programmes stood out and excelled above the rest.

The second stage of the internship involved conducting close critical analysis of four of the leading contenders for the Womanity Award. We were asked to submit an in-depth report on one of the 4 shortlisted projects 'Take Back the Tech', consisting of the partner organisations: [Association for Progressive Communications](#) (APC), based in South Africa, and [La Sandia Digital](#) and [Luchadoras](#) working in Mexico. Take Back the Tech! is a global and collaborative campaign that aims to counter and build awareness of tech-related violence against women. This comes in the form of online harassment, trolling, cyberbullying, online stalking and revenge porn websites. Take Back the Tech offers safety roadmaps and information to women suffering from tech-related violence against women, enabling them to respond to online abuse, claim virtual space, and creatively influence policies and practices.

Take Back the Tech's unique approach, aims to create safe digital spaces and build activist feminist networks online, acknowledging the growing power and importance of online voices and spaces. APC is a long standing leader in the field and La Sandia Digital and Luchadoras are younger online activist organizations that are able to negotiate the burgeoning issue of online violence specifically in the Mexican context. These organisations' commitment to

innovation and adaptability is necessary to counter the ever more prevalent issue of technology based violence against women (VAW). This process ideally will not just help prevent online violence but demand a renegotiation of gender politics online, both acknowledging problematic constructions of masculinity as well as bolstering a feminist activist discourse.

As LSE students, this internship afforded us the opportunity to engage in a real world professional application of our academic work in an intersectional, interdisciplinary way. As a group, we were able to learn from the applicant organizations and from our peers, examining the intersection of media, technology, and gender politics through a critical analysis of the work that is being done to counter and prevent VAW. The experience also raised our awareness of the important work being done by the Womanity Foundation. It has been rewarding to participate in a project that devotes itself to improving women's lives and having examined first-hand the strengths of the Take Back the Tech! programme, and the collaboration of APC and La Sandia Digital /Luchadoras, we are excited to follow the progress of the replication process facilitated by the Womanity Award.

[Antonella Notari Vischer – Womanity Foundation](#) from [Polis Video](#) on [Vimeo](#).

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