

HarassMap

Executive Summary

HarassMap is a new social initiative that will help restore Egypt's tradition of public safety for women using an SMS reporting system for sexual harassment to change its social acceptability, spread awareness and revitalize the public movement.

Our use of **new mobile technology** and **innovative marketing** to send and receive SMS messages will change social outreach in Egypt - **reaching more people than ever before** as Egypt's 55 million mobile phone subscribers grows in number by an average of 10% each year.

HarassMap is a hybrid model that will seek grants and sponsorships from partners, but it will also generate revenue from the SMS reports, which will be re-invested into making the project sustainable and increasing its reach through marketing and awareness.

THE MARKET

Of Egypt's mobile phone market of 55 million, between 30-50% are owned by women. This means **16.5-27.5 million women will have access to HM**, in addition to women who use phones at street kiosks. This number is growing every month.

According to ECWR's study, 83% of Egyptian women and 98% of foreign women are harassed in Egypt – half of these at least once daily. If each of these women sends only one SMS report to HM, revenues are projected at \$734,000-\$1.2 million. Our goal is to encourage all women to send an SMS each time they are harassed:

OPERATIONS

The HM team is made up of the leading experts on sexual harassment in Egypt, with experience in the private, public and social sectors, including the United Nations, IT, and NGOs like ECWR, Ashoka and GTZ.

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ELEMENTS OF VALUE

- Safe, easy system for reporting sexual harassment
- First in Egypt to use mobile phone technology to reach a huge potential market
- Will mobilize existing public support among men and women to change the social acceptability of harassment and increase women's safety
- Professional team of leaders in the anti-sexual harassment movement with experience in producing concrete results

HM works on 4 levels: Action, Assistance, Awareness and Advocacy to create a system that allows us - the public - to become the solution to a social problem with which we all struggle.

Action

Reporting Harassment by SMS - For the first time, there will be a system that victims of harassment can use to report sexual harassment on the spot. Just send an SMS with your location and what happened to our number (we are looking into the feasibility of accepting a photo as well). We'll read and verify your report, then map it on a public website (www.harassmap.org). Cell tower triangulation will assist with location verification.

Women blog it out – Talking helps. Women can add to and read our online book of stories, "Stories from the Street."

Benefits of Action

- One by one, the SMS reports will identify "hotspots" where extra caution should be taken and will prove that harassment is still a problem in a transparent, easy to understand format.
- "Hotspots" will help police to know where an increase in police presence is needed.
- Women often suffer from feeling shame, isolation, frustration and self-loathing for not having responded quickly enough. Reporting harassment by HM validates women as victims of a crime committed against them and their right to safety.
- HM lets women join with other women - and men – in speaking out against what has become a social cancer that infringes upon women's access to the public space, safe employment, safe schools, safe transportation, and participation in public life.
- Together, our voices can change the social norm that causes victims to remain silent to avoid ridicule, abuse or negative impacts on their marriages, and instead challenge the permissiveness of harassment.

Assistance

Information and Referral System - HM will provide victims with a list of services – how to make a police report, legal aid, psychological help, self defense classes, how to get more involved.

Police Response - HM will provide hotspot locations to police in order to help them with their effort to increase police presence in high harassment areas. We will also advocate for them to use their radios to respond to SMS reports on-site.

Benefits of Assistance

- HM will explain what services and laws exist to protect victims keeps women from benefitting from them, and how to access them.
- The referral service will also serve as a forum for tying together many of the activities of other NGOs and institutions (such as the ECWR, NGO Task Force on Sexual Harassment, UNFPA, ILO, NCW, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of the Interior). Not only will it help to advertise their activities and services, but it will also facilitate cooperation.

Awareness

Marketing campaign - The first step to eliminating sexual harassment is to break the silence and promote constructive awareness about the facts (such as 'properly dressed' has no statistical bearing).

We'll create a buzz with: stickers with the SMS number and catch phrases in hotspots and public transportation; radio spots; Facebook; Twitter; Email; national and international media outreach; and as many creative opportunities as possible to promote usage of the system, facts about harassment and individuals' role in stopping it. Our goal is to make harassment un-cool and socially unacceptable.

Instructional materials - It is not enough to just be aware of a problem. HM will arm women with skills they can use. Our website will feature: information on why sending HM reports is important to ending harassment; videos on self-defense especially for harassment; tactics for fighting harassment in your community; links to reports, laws, legal proposals, and instructions for filing a police report; results of web polls; news, the status of the issue in Egypt, and other initiatives; how to get stickers, t-shirts, etc. to raise awareness yourself

Group activities - Non-violent and inclusive events will be planned such as:

- peaceful gatherings in "hotspots"
- self-defense classes
- "ambassador visits" to shop owners in hotspot areas to discuss harassment in their neighborhood, request their participation in speaking out against it, and pledging to be a "harassment free zone"

Benefits of Awareness

- Speaking openly about a social issue and bringing it into the light is the first step towards changing the social norm and stopping the violence.
- Harassment is widespread. The more awareness is raised about it, the safer women will be.
- Providing accurate information, such as the statistics below, will increase public support for change

Advocacy

Online Map - All SMS reports will be mapped on a public website that will display each location and details provided by the victim. The map will create a powerful, instantly understandable documentation of the extent of the problem.

Cooperation with existing advocacy campaigns

The previous campaign succeeded in building enough public support that the media and government took notice. The Ministry of Justice and National Council for Women responded with a new law draft, as have ECWR and a coalition of MPs. Public support also resulted in a successful court case and some police enforcement. The Ministry of Education distributed a booklet and the Ministry of Tourism briefly ran TV awareness ads. Since the focus of all the NGOs with anti-sexual harassment activities is advocacy alone, HM will provide our maps to them to support their efforts.

Benefits of Advocacy

- The public movement driving progress between 2006-2008 has declined and most momentum was lost. The draft law was never voted on, and enforcement is spotty. HM's revitalization of public support will move the advocacy effort forward, and provide transparent documentation of the issue.
- A law does not change everything, but it will be an important step towards reducing sexual harassment. By making it an official crime, it is a step towards more enforcement and a rejection of it as "normal".

Excerpts from ECWR's 2008 study "Clouds in Egypt's Sky"

- **83%** of Egyptian women and **98%** of foreign women surveyed said they had been sexually harassed in Egypt, about **half** of these on a daily basis
- **72.5%** of harassment victims surveyed were veiled
- Only **2.4%** women sought help from police
- **62.4%** of men surveyed confirmed that they harass women (ogling women's bodies, whistling and shouting, sexually explicit comments, phone harassment, touching of women's bodies, following and stalking, exposing his penis)
- **69%** harass women on the streets, **49.1%** on public transportation, **42.4%** in parks and cafes, **29%** in educational institutions, **19.8%** on beaches, and **6.2%** in the workplace
- **61.4%** of witnesses to harassment ignored the issue completely. Only **0.1%** reported trying to help the victim
- Most men claimed harassing women satisfies repressed sexual desires and makes them feel masculine, and many said they are accustomed to harassing women since they were young