Combatting Violence Against Women with Blockchain Technology

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Violence Against Women (VAW)

- "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, <u>physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women</u>, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (United Nations General Assembly 1993, article 1).

- Many countries and organizations have a separate, broader definition for <u>gender-based violence</u>. There are also differing definitions for more specific types of violence against women such as <u>domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence.</u>

Challenges

- Violent Ideology
  - VAW as a societal norm creates a culture of violence that is legitimized

- Economic Instability
  - Direct costs of providing services to survivors and prevention programs
  - Indirect costs of reduced tax revenue due to lower household income

- Democratic Erosion
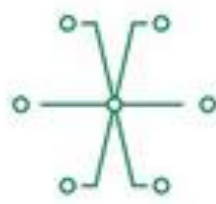 - VAW erodes trust in institutions and the rule of law
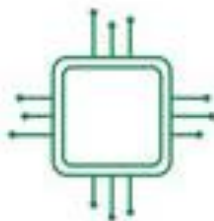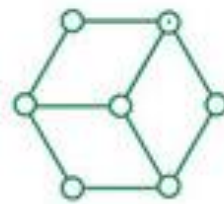
Blockchain Technology

- A blockchain is a highly secure, reliable, and dispersed network that allows people to <u>record transaction activity, store data, and exchange value</u> in a distributed record book (ledger) that cannot be modified and is not controlled by any central authority, but instead maintained by computers all around the world (Chainlink 2023).

- Revolutionizes the way transactions are recorded, verified, and executed, offering a <u>secure, transparent, and decentralized alternative</u> to traditional centralized systems.

BLOCK CHAIN   NODE   DISTRIBUTED COMPUTING   DECENTRALIZED   ENCRYPTION   BLOCKCHAIN LEDGER

Advantages
- Increased Trust
  - Immutable
  - Anonymous
  - Transparency
- Secure
- Efficient
  - Streamlines processes by automating tasks
- Faster Transactions
  - Does not require intermediaries
- Globally Accessible
  - Only requires internet connection

Recommendations

- Track Incidents of VAW
  - Use as a predictor of both systematic VAW and other crimes
- Economic Stability
  - Provides survivors access to financial services and immediate funds
  - Donors funding for VAW can be traced to ensure it's being properly utilized
- Cross-border Collaboration
  - Provides women a digital identity

Potential Negative Effects

- Knows no boundaries
    - Code written in one country under one set of laws and regulations may impact citizens of another with a different set of laws and regulations
    - Worldwide regulations are needed

- Data privacy concerns
    - Violence-related data could be accessed by unauthorized users, to include abusers, and could lead to further abuse, intimidation, or retaliation
    - This requires better protective measures at the end user device and interface. Regular vulnerability testing is also crucial.

- Lack of central oversight allows for abusive content to be shared

- Vulnerable to false reporting

- Can be expensive to develop and implement

Thank You