

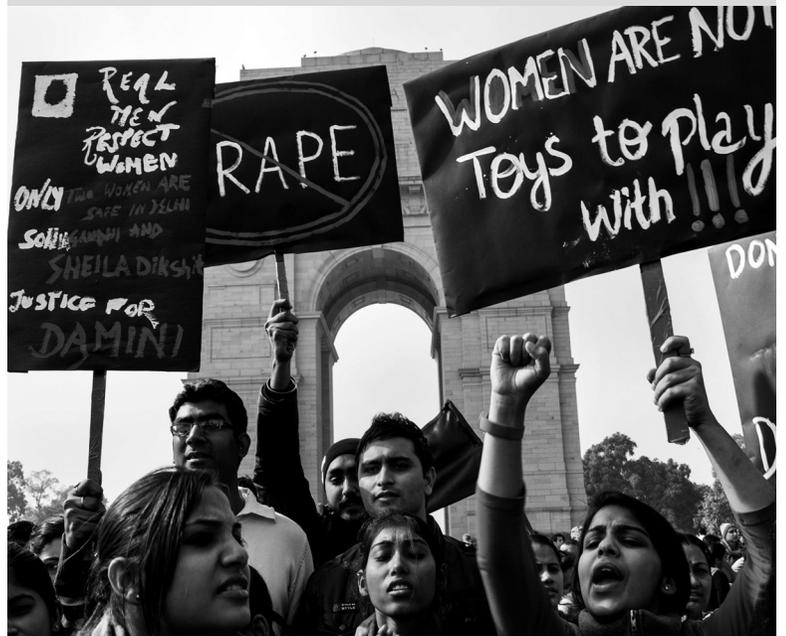
# IDS Bulletin

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## COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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# Disruption and Design: Crowdmapping Young Women's Experience in Cities\*†

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**Abstract** The history of women's exclusion and invisibility in cities is well charted, yet young women's experience of sexual harassment and assault has been difficult to quantify. This article discusses the Free to Be project initiated by Plan International in 2018. In partnership with Monash University's XYX Lab and CrowdSpot, the crowdmapping web app enabled young women in Delhi, Kampala, Lima, Madrid, and Sydney to identify and share their experiences of public spaces. It is believed to be the most ambitious global crowdsourced data collection project on street harassment ever undertaken. By using coding and visual data techniques, the data demonstrated the scale of the problem and the urgent need for city-level decision makers, as well as other members of society, to take action. This article outlines the findings from Free to Be, and explores the ways data and activism led by girls and young women are a powerful method for creating change.

**Keywords** crowdmapping, crowdsourcing, data, sexual harassment, cities, safety, girls, global, violence, social inclusion.

## 1 Introduction

There is a lengthy history of female exclusion and invisibility in cities, and girls' and young women's experience of sexual harassment and assault is difficult to chart. This article examines the findings of the Free to Be project initiated by Plan International (Goulds 2018) and its importance as a tool for holding public bodies and individuals in society to account. A public participatory geographic information system (Sieber 2006), or crowdmap (hereafter referred to as the 'Free to Be Map'), was developed in partnership with Monash University's XYX Lab and CrowdSpot, which enabled young women in Delhi, Kampala, Lima, Madrid, and Sydney to identify and share their perceptions of, and experiences in, urban public spaces (Goulds 2018).

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Believed to be the most ambitious global crowdsourced data collection project on street harassment ever undertaken, the coding and visual data techniques surfaced the tendencies, tensions, and trends of sexual harassment in cities.

Across the complex and often conflicting cultures of this diverse set of cities, the platform allowed girls and young women to share stories, generating a vast bank of data that can hold stakeholders to account for their inaction and acceptance of harassment of girls and young women, which has a direct negative effect on their freedom of movement and ability to participate in city life. The data and the stories from the girls and young women challenge the perspectives of the police, public transport operators, and local government authorities, as well as generating awareness about the levels of harassment and violence that go unnoticed, in order to initiate behaviour change. This article outlines the findings from Free to Be, and explores the ways data and activism led by girls and young women are a powerful method for creating change.

## 2 Methodology

The Free to Be Map was developed by Plan International in collaboration with XYX Lab and CrowdSpot. It was piloted in Melbourne in 2016 (Kalms *et al.* 2018), and rolled out in Sydney, Lima, Madrid, Kampala, and Delhi in 2018. The tool comprises an interactive map and survey which allows girls and women to drop 'good pins' or 'bad pins' on the map of their city, answer a small number of questions about the location, and leave free text comments. Given the risk that such tools can highlight the vulnerability of girls and young women, and frighten them off entering certain areas, participants were asked to identify not just bad experiences of the city but also the good ones. The inclusion of 'good pins' also allowed the research to identify the characteristics that made places feel safe and welcoming, in order to help drive solutions.

Young women from Plan International activist programmes in each of the cities helped refine the tool and the interface to engage girls and young women from diverse communities, focusing on ease of use, adaptations for appropriate language, and navigation options. The tools and text on the website were translated into relevant languages prior to the start of data collection. Reflection workshops were also held with young women at the end of data collection. These workshops assembled small groups of young women to reflect on the emerging trends and findings. The reflection workshops were recorded and transcribed and some of the findings from those discussions are included in this article.

Methods of participant recruitment varied by city, but included social media campaigns, news media reports, and television and radio exposure. In order to collect data from those who might

**Table 1 Number of valid pins and comments in each city, by ratio of good pins to bad pins or comments**

	Number of pins*	Good to bad ratio	Number of comments	Good to bad ratio
Delhi	14,876	37:63	4,602	30:70
Kampala	1,253	20:80	1,251	20:80
Lima	2,037	11:89	1,290	6:94
Madrid	951	16:84	670	12:88
Sydney	2,083	25:75	1,479	21:79
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,200</b>	<b>22:78**</b>	<b>9,292</b>	<b>18:82**</b>

Notes \* Total number of pins excluding men, trolls/false pins, and people over the age of 30 years.

\*\* Average across cities.

Source Data from Free to Be, Plan International Australia.

otherwise not have access to the digital and online facilities required, in Delhi and Kampala, and to a lesser extent in Lima and Madrid, girls and young women were also directly recruited on the street. Women and girls and those identifying as other genders who reported themselves to be aged 30 or younger were included in the analysis (see Table 1). In total, 21,200 valid pins and 9,292 comments were included in the analysis. Note that participants were able to submit more than one pin.

Pins deemed as inappropriate or false were made invisible to other users during the data collection and removed from analysis. Excluded pins included those exhibiting nonsense, homophobia, sexism, or racism, or where there was an error in placement.

Survey results were assessed by country, and comments attached to pins were translated into English and coded. Some coding categories are common from city to city (such as sexual harassment); other categories arose from the data for the specific city. For example, the frequency of comments around public masturbation in Madrid led to that becoming a coding category. Some comments triggered more than one coding. For example, a comment might include notes about the physical conditions of the place and details about the particular incident that occurred. Some pins record historic events or incidents and some describe the ongoing 'feel' of a place.

With the exception of Kampala, girls and young women mostly shared stories about their experiences of sexual harassment, especially non-physical harassment. For this analysis, sexual harassment was divided into that involving physical contact and non-physical contact. Where the type of harassment was unclear, both comments were coded with both categories. Sexual harassment not involving physical contact ranged from unwanted so-called 'compliments' ('*piropos*' in Madrid) and

catcalling, intense staring/leering, surreptitious photography, and propositioning, to being verbally threatened with rape, stalked, chased, followed, and blocked. Sexual harassment involving physical contact ranged from a 'pat on the bottom' through to groping. Incidents of rape were not commonly reported by the participants; the few that were reported are included under sexual harassment with physical contact. Any incident involving physical contact is technically sexual assault, but many young women are inured to some forms of physical contact and would not categorise them as assault. This division between touch and no touch is to some extent arbitrary and not necessarily indicative of the level of fear it might induce: being chased, while not involving physical contact, could reasonably be construed as being more disturbing than a pat on the rear (CASA 2014).

### 3 Context

The five cities included in the study are spread across five continents, and reflect a range of population size, income groups, crime rates, and levels of inclusion of girls and young women.

- **Delhi:** capital of India, population 16 million (Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi 2016). Delhi reported 33 per cent of total crimes against women and also has a higher rate of kidnapping and abduction compared to other cities in India (Government of India 2016).
- **Kampala:** capital of Uganda, population 1.5 million (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2016). In Uganda, 22 per cent of women aged 15–49 have experienced some form of sexual violence (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2018).
- **Lima:** capital of Peru, population over 8 million (INEI 2017). In 2017, more than 1,200 cases of sexual violence were reported in Lima, and 70 per cent of the victims were girls under 18 years old (MIMP 2017).
- **Madrid:** capital of Spain, population 3.2 million (INE 2017). There was a 7.8 per cent rise in reports of sexual crimes in 2017, compared with 2016 (Ministerio del Interior 2017).
- **Sydney:** population 5 million (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017). In the 12 months to March 2018, the majority of New South Wales criminal incidents for major offences decreased, but sexual assault and other sexual offences increased (Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research 2018).

Plan International operates in all of these cities, including through its Safer Cities for Girls programme in Delhi, Kampala, and Lima.<sup>6</sup>

### 4 Generating data to inform action

The nature of the Free to Be Map allows girls and young women to enter their own experiences, revealing 'not only the locations of safe spaces as well as the unsafe areas in the city, but also the

**Table 2 Coded participant comments on bad pins**

	Delhi		Kampala		Lima		Madrid		Sydney	
<b>Total no. of filtered bad pins*</b>	2,675		968		1,169		560		1,170	
	No.	%**	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
All sexual harassment cases	1,734	65	231	24	987	84	467	85	836	72
Sexual harassment – no physical contact	1,082	40	84	9	624	53	402	72	663	57
Sexual harassment – physical contact only	78	3	140	15	189	16	62	11	93	8
Sexual harassment – both	574	22	7	0.7	174	15	12	2	80	7
Flashing	10	0.4	-	-	19	2	7	1	17	1
Masturbation	3	0.1	-	-	20	2	59	11	20	2
Under the influence – drugs and alcohol	383	14	87	7	58	5	81	14	152	13
Group of offenders/ attackers	239	9	148	15	104	9	96	17	50	4
Theft/robbery	204	8	448	46	140	12	22	4	18	2
Second-hand accounts	-	-	348	36	102	9	-	-	28	2
Unpredictable people/ loitering	-	-	102	11	71	5	44	8	203	17
Physical and verbal assault (non-sexual)	111	4	135	14	41	4	32	6	52	4
Kidnapping	16	1	28	3	9	1	-	-	4	0.3
Murder/death	8	0.3	68	7	2	0.2	1	0.2	3	0.3
Lack of security/police	110	4	524	54	95	8	14	3	63	5
Dark/lack of lighting	54	2	226	23	29	2	36	6	120	10
Public transportation	145	5	-	-	178	15	-	-	132	11
Infrastructure	361	13	58	6			20	4	63	5
Secluded/deserted area	146	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Road congestion	-	-	82	8	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes \* Number of bad pins with valid comments attached to them. \*\*Percentages as total of all comments included in analysis.

Source Data from Free to Be, Plan International Australia.

perception of these spaces as described by women themselves' (Kalms 2017). Girls and women choose which stories to tell, using their own words, with the knowledge that their stories will be immediately visible to others to create a shared narrative. Creating the tool with young female activists ensured relevance and ownership, as well as clear strategies for using the data from the outset. Data were made public immediately, allowing them to be viewed and used in real time by anyone, generating evidence for activism and advocacy.

The Free to Be Map asked girls and young women to identify good or bad places by dropping relevant 'pins' on parts of their city. The tool itself did not ask them to talk specifically about harassment, abuse, or gender discrimination, though some recruitment methods used this language. However, girls and young women across all sites overwhelmingly shared how harassment and abuse shaped their experiences of moving around their cities. In all five locations, girls and young women were much more likely to drop 'bad' pins than good, with the highest proportion of bad pins dropped in Lima (89 per cent) and the lowest in Delhi (63 per cent). Participants were able to add a free text comment to their pin, and where they did, these comments were coded by the type of incident they described; see the results in Table 2.

Results show that in Madrid, 85 per cent of comments on bad pins were about sexual harassment, and in Lima 84 per cent. Non-physical sexual harassment mentioned in comments ranged from unwanted so-called 'compliments' and catcalling, intense staring/leering, surreptitious photography, and propositioning, to being verbally threatened with rape, stalked, chased, followed, and blocked.

There was variation between the cities on the types of incidents and the types of discrimination recorded by participants. In Kampala, for example, girls and young women were more likely to highlight risks of theft (46 per cent of comments on bad pins) than sexual harassment (24 per cent), despite existing evidence of high levels of gender-based violence throughout the country (see Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2018). Meanwhile in Sydney, some participants highlighted specific risks faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex+ (LGBTQI+) girls and women:

*There's always groups of creepy drunk guys that loiter around there and make me feel very uncomfortable in the evenings/night. Lots of catcalling and guys occasionally follow me to places that I am going (bus stop/bar/club). This especially happens when I'm with my girlfriend (I'm gay). (age 21, Sydney)*

Race was also an important factor raised by girls and young women in Madrid and Sydney, with participants identifying

discrimination based on ethnicity in 10 per cent of bad pins in Sydney. In Madrid, this was only 4 per cent, but when young women discussed this finding in the reflection workshop, they suggested that unwelcome comments are often focused first on a girl's or woman's appearance, but can also include elements of racial stereotypes or particularly target females of certain ethnicities. In all these examples, girls and women prioritised what they considered to be the main factor making them feel unsafe, and what they wanted to share and highlight to others.

Women and girls, by and large, identified perpetrators as men and boys, often in groups. The influence of drugs or alcohol was also frequently reported to be a factor: 14 per cent of the bad pins reported in Delhi and Madrid involved drugs or alcohol, and 13 per cent in Sydney. In Sydney, the discrepancy between when the public transport stops running and when the bars close was commented upon. In addition, the impact of the city's 'lock-out laws'<sup>7</sup> was repeatedly noted as an issue exacerbating the congregation of drunk men and enabling verbal harassment against girls and young women. As the comments below demonstrate, group mentality combined with the influence of drugs and alcohol create a very intimidating environment.

*There are always drunk men or in a group, annoying the women who pass by. It is very uncomfortable because they are in a group and it is impossible not to bother. (age 25, Lima)*

*Walking back to the station after a night out with my bestie (female) and a group of men walking behind us started talking about 'gangbanging'. (age 19, Sydney)*

*This street, during day or night, is very secluded and some men abuse alcohol and smack, and then verbally harass us. (age 24, Delhi)*

In comments from girls and young women there was a frustration at the lack of accountability for perpetrators of these types of actions. In particular, the presence of other men in a group seemed to legitimise discriminatory behaviour. Participants shared how they were changing their behaviour because no one was ensuring that the men and boys would: nearly half of participants in Sydney (47 per cent) said they would not go back to a place alone because of what had happened to them. Across all the cities, more than 10 per cent never went back at all. This creates a complex personal geography of 'no-go' and 'take-extreme-care' zones that girls and young women must negotiate every day, something found in other studies on street harassment (Osmond and Woodcock 2015).

The majority of girls and young women did not tell anyone about a negative event that happened to them. Only 30–40 per cent

of respondents in each city said they told family or friends, but across the cities just 10 per cent reported incidents to authorities. In most cases, where incidents were reported, authorities apparently did not act (authorities acted in 16 per cent of reported cases in Kampala, 18 per cent in Lima, 27 per cent in Madrid, and 31 per cent in Sydney, according to participant responses). The processes for girls and young women to hold perpetrators to account are currently so few – they fear lack of action or not being taken seriously, or worse. Participants talked about the risk of stigma, blame, or further harassment, including from the authorities themselves.

The Free to Be Map, as similar online crowd-based mobilisation movements have demonstrated, shows that there is an appetite for ordinary girls and young women to talk about their everyday experiences of harassment and violence, but there are few viable options to do so (Kalms 2019). Participants used this tool to express their anger at the unfairness and discrimination, and how they are constantly paying the price.

### **5 Accountability**

Free to Be, like all online map-based social surveys, is an excellent collector of stories and impressions of a city from those whose voices are not often heard or recorded. All users were anonymous on the Free to Be Map, with no option to submit a name. This was largely to ensure the safety of participants, so there was no chance of them being identified, but the anonymity proved particularly advantageous for girls and young women outlining experiences of sexual harassment or abuse in their city. Many recorded their reluctance to formally detail or report incidents, and the anonymity of Free to Be overcame this barrier, allowing multiple stories that indicate the type and prevalence of harassment and other concerns to be collected. Without these stories, the negative everyday experiences of girls and young women as they move around their city is invisible and easy to ignore. The survey's data enable girls, women, and others to hold city authorities, bystanders, and the perpetrators themselves to account for harassment and its negative impacts.

The generation of data informed a wider strategic intention by Plan International; advocacy reports and actions planned from the outset to honour stories and bring about change, with findings launched on the International Day of the Girl (IDG) on 11 October 2019 (Goulds 2018). At the city level and to varying degrees, Plan International offices included the authorities in the discussion about the tool design or in the launch of Free to Be, thereby ensuring that through the whole process those with power paid attention to the experiences of girls and young women. In discussions on the findings, one young woman said:

*For us there isn't anything new [in this research]. The most important finding isn't for us but for the world that you can*

*see how insecure we feel. They harass us, they touch us, they do everything to us. There is finally somewhere where it is written down.* (age 21, reflection workshop, Madrid)

The involvement of young women in the design of the Free to Be Map was a crucial factor in its usability and high levels of participation. Plan International's ongoing work with groups of girls and young women also provided a platform to empower them to use the data and make space for them to discuss findings directly with decision makers. Data alone are powerful, but incorporating modes for use and fora for advocating with those in power are essential to providing opportunities for real change.

The themes gathered from the many stories submitted on the Free to Be Maps across the five cities demonstrated clearly both the ubiquity of sexual harassment and the impunity with which men and boys perpetrate it against girls and young women. Those participating understood that street harassment is firmly founded in the structural inequality between the genders. Gender discrimination was the dominant form of discrimination identified by participants in Madrid, Lima, Delhi, and Sydney, with more than half of all instances of street harassment identified as being gender-based. Even in Kampala, where only 41 per cent of participants noted that their experience was based on any form of discrimination, the majority of these participants noted gender as the basis of that discrimination. Despite the differing cultural and legal frameworks in each of the countries, the universal lack of accountability for male actions was very clear. However, directly holding each individual perpetrator to account is beyond the reach of this project, of the young people involved, or of civil society organisations. The goal is, therefore, to provide data that will push society at large to ensure systems, processes, and environments are safe and empowering for girls and young women.

Many of the respondents in all the cities noted that sexual harassment of some kind was so frequent that they were simply used to it: it was 'normal'. This was strongest in Madrid, where nearly half signalled such resignation, and weakest in Delhi. With that resignation, and normalisation, comes the expectation that women themselves take on responsibility for male actions. Despite their limited (if any) ability to control the actions of men, in the absence of any other constraining mechanisms, girls and women are forced to take on this responsibility – and wider society expects this of them (Graham *et al.* 2017). Consequently, some of the girls and young women never returned to particular areas of their city, or avoided them when they were on their own. Restricting their own mobility in the city and taking precautions (such as changing what they wear) gives girls and young women a sense of agency within the limited or adapted scope of opportunity in which they are allowed to operate (Nussbaum 2001). However, there is no guarantee that these precautions will have any effect on preventing either the violence or the victim blaming.

*I have just left Sydney after five years living and studying here. Both love and hate for the city. As a female, I never felt safe in this city. I get sexual harassment (catcalling, swearing, perverted stares) almost everywhere I go in Sydney. No matter how much I cover myself with hideous clothes, this never stops. (age 23, Sydney)*

*You have to [be] quite covered in ethnic clothes otherwise even if anything wrong happens to you when you are wearing Western or you arrived late at home only you are supposed to be the responsible person. (age 23, Delhi)*

Reporting to authorities was rare because it was assumed that, at best, they would not take the matter seriously, or at worst, complaining would have further negative consequences. There is very often a power imbalance between perpetrators and their targets, which grants an assumed impunity to the perpetrator. Given that many forms of harassment are not illegal, are difficult to report or document when they do meet criminal thresholds of behaviour, and that sexual offences more broadly face low levels of reporting and successful convictions, this assumed impunity is likely accurate (Daly and Bohours 2010). In addition, there were reports of bystander inaction and accusations that the young woman had invited harassment by her clothing, her manner, or simply by being there. All this reinforces the impunity that men and boys operate under, as well as the lack of accountability by authorities.

Sexual harassment occurs on a spectrum ranging from catcalling to rape. However, even incidents on the 'milder' end of the spectrum have the power to cause girls and young women to change their behaviour in the city. More broadly, such harassment serves as a reminder of the social and physical vulnerability of women, and therefore has a significant role in increasing the fear of more serious violent attacks (Pain 1997; Cook, David and Grant 2001; Whitzman 2013). The power differentials of gender inequity produce a dynamic that results in lessened accountability for men and heightened responsibility for girls and young women. Wider society – from those with decision-making power to bystanders to family members – supports this status quo by ignoring, endorsing, trivialising, or accepting these inequalities. Ensuring girls and young women's experiences are visible is vital to pushing all members of society to take responsibility for holding perpetrators to account and challenging harassment wherever they see it.

With more than 30,000 pins dropped on the maps in just six weeks, the project provides clear evidence that girls and young women are willing to share their experiences of street harassment when they believe they will be heard and it will lead to change. This points to the need for a universal shift in discourse: chronic rates of underreporting can no longer be blamed on girls

and young women being unwilling to share their experiences. Accountability for improving rates of reporting does not lie with the young women who are experiencing harassment; this accountability lies with authorities to make reporting systems, laws, and culture more accessible and welcoming to these young women. Given the relatively low proportion of reporting to authorities (and the lack of meaningful response from them), Free to Be demonstrates the need for alternative forms of recording the lived experiences of girls and young women that would otherwise remain silent.

Free to Be provides the data and evidence on sexual harassment to challenge local public transport and other authorities. While the mindset that permits unimpeded harassment to occur is perhaps beyond the control of these authorities, they do have the power to make the environments that they control safer; they can become accountable. Zero tolerance, belief in and support for those who lodge complaints, advertising and awareness campaigns, and technological, natural, and formal surveillance are all measures that can be implemented (Gekoski *et al.* 2015). Further, such actions can promote the accountability of individuals to change their behaviours and hold each other to account.

## **6 Learning beyond context**

Across each of the five cities, despite their distinct cultural, economic, and geographical differences, parallels can be drawn. We can begin to understand some universal truths about the harassment girls and young women are experiencing and where accountability lies for addressing this. Free to Be was deliberately promoted as an opportunity for action through gathering stories and data, and the level of engagement with Free to Be highlights that when girls and young women are invited to share experiences to create change, they do so actively. Girls' and young women's stories are rarely heard on this issue, but when thousands of data points are collected and made available to decision makers, girls and young women start to become visible in policy and planning. This highlights the important role that crowdsourced data can play in creating change, by bridging the gap between girls' and young women's everyday experiences and the decision makers who have the power to change this reality.

Indeed, Free to Be highlights a number of opportunities that crowdmapping provides for those wishing to understand lived experience. Firstly, crowdmapping can improve data accuracy through allowing participants to associate submissions with a specific geographic coordinate, especially in contexts where people associate a variety of names (landmarks, natural features, etc.) with locations. Further, people increasingly understand their connection to cities and places in a spatial context – Google Maps has consistently been ranked as one of the top five most popular apps on smartphones (Hartmans 2017).

Crowdmapping can also generate greater levels of participation as people are attracted to visually enticing images and interfaces, generating greater levels of public participation than text-based surveys. With the increasing prominence of social media, enabling users to view and comment on other submissions creates a powerful dynamic where people can share similar stories, deliberate, and feel connected with one another. Finally, crowdmapping offers powerful communication tools, in real time/spatial dataset outputs, which, when visualised, can communicate large datasets using easily digestible powerful methods.

However, the project also highlighted some of the challenges of crowdmapping, which should be taken into account by those wishing to use this approach in diverse international contexts. In under-resourced or remote settings, there may be people and whole communities who lack skills in reading and navigating a mapping system, struggle with a lack of WiFi or data connectivity, or have older hardware which is not compatible with the latest or emerging software. In both Kampala and Delhi, promoting the website via social and traditional media proved ineffective, generating very few responses. Further, the most vulnerable girls and young women in some of the poorest parts of the city simply could not access this platform, due to lack of access to the internet, digital literacy, or exposure to the promotion and information about the site on mainstream media. It was therefore imperative to find alternative methods to include those voices, specifically through individual direct recruitment and community outreach. This proved effective in getting high numbers of target participants, but such recruitment methods work against anonymity and may have affected the willingness of young women to be candid.

In some locations the level of detail contained on the base map does not necessarily reflect the situation on the ground. While there is a global drive to collaboratively map locations, this challenge has the potential to be a cause for discontent, low participation, or inaccurate responses. Some parts of the Delhi map, particularly on the outskirts of the city, were not visible, and participants therefore had to drop a pin as close to the area as they could.

Anonymity can be an advantage of crowdmapping, but also has the limitation of not being able to control who is dropping pins and leaving comments. The nature and extent of malicious targeting is likely to vary by context. The Free to Be Maps for all five cities were affected by 'trolls', but Madrid was particularly targeted over a period of about 48 hours. It was listed on websites inviting other saboteurs to go onto the site and drop false and offensive pins. In total, over the data collection period, 1,200 of the total 3,000 pins for Madrid were deemed as offensive or false, made invisible to other participants, and removed from the data analysis – a considerably higher proportion than the

other cities. This action demonstrates a level of determination to stop girls and young women sharing their stories, suggesting the collective action posed a threat to the patriarchal status quo. The open nature of crowdmapping makes it extremely difficult to prevent such action, so structures need to be in place to moderate and respond.

## 7 Conclusions

The Free to Be project demonstrated the power of crowdmapping in collecting stories from girls and young women in diverse global cities. The scale of sexual harassment recorded by these participants demonstrated the need for better systems to collect this information – systems which involve girls and women from the outset, and are designed to meet their needs and deal with these difficult and sometimes dangerous topics. Participants highlighted the extent to which *they* are the ones changing *their* behaviours, reducing their participation in activities and limiting their movement around the city, i.e. they are the ones being held to account for the violence enacted against them. Currently, members of society can ignore or accept the ongoing, everyday harassment experienced by girls and young women, and the ways in which it limits their participation: these data provide a powerful tool highlighting the scale of the problem, and thereby generating a clear argument for urgent action. Authorities and decision makers in cities must be held to account in making city spaces safer and responding more effectively, and in turn supporting the behaviour change of individual men and boys.

Overall, crowdmapping offers a unique platform for collective action – generating a safe, anonymous space with a large number of stories, enabling trends to emerge, and patterns to be identified across voices and experiences. However, careful planning and consideration of the limitations is required in low-resource settings. Further, crowdmapping should be complemented with ongoing actions to ensure a participatory and relevant design, and a clear plan of action for data use in terms of advocating for and achieving change.

## Notes

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- 3 Hayley Cull, Director of Advocacy and Community Engagement, Plan International, Australia.
- 4 Gill Matthewson, Lecturer, Monash University XYX Lab, Australia.
- 5 Anthony Aisenberg, consultant and founder, CrowdSpot, Australia.
- 6 The Safer Cities for Girls programme is a joint programme developed in partnership between Plan International, UN-Habitat, and Women in Cities International. The programme's goal is to build safe, accountable, and inclusive cities with and for adolescent girls (aged 13–18). The expected outcomes of the programme include: (1) increased safety and access to public spaces; (2) increased active and meaningful participation in urban development and governance; and (3) increased autonomous mobility in the city. The programme is currently being implemented in ten cities: Delhi, India; Hanoi, Vietnam; Cairo, Alexandria, and Assiut, Egypt; Kampala, Uganda; Nairobi, Kenya; Lima, Peru; Asunción, Paraguay; and Honiara, Solomon Islands. See **Plan International** website.
- 7 'Lock-outs' refer to a policy introduced by the New South Wales government, where patrons are not permitted to enter licensed venues in certain areas of Sydney after a designated time.

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