



World Bank/SVRI Development Marketplace: Innovations for Addressing Gender-based Violence Updates

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Safe YOU App: Armenian women Use Technology to Tackle Gender-Based Violence innovation

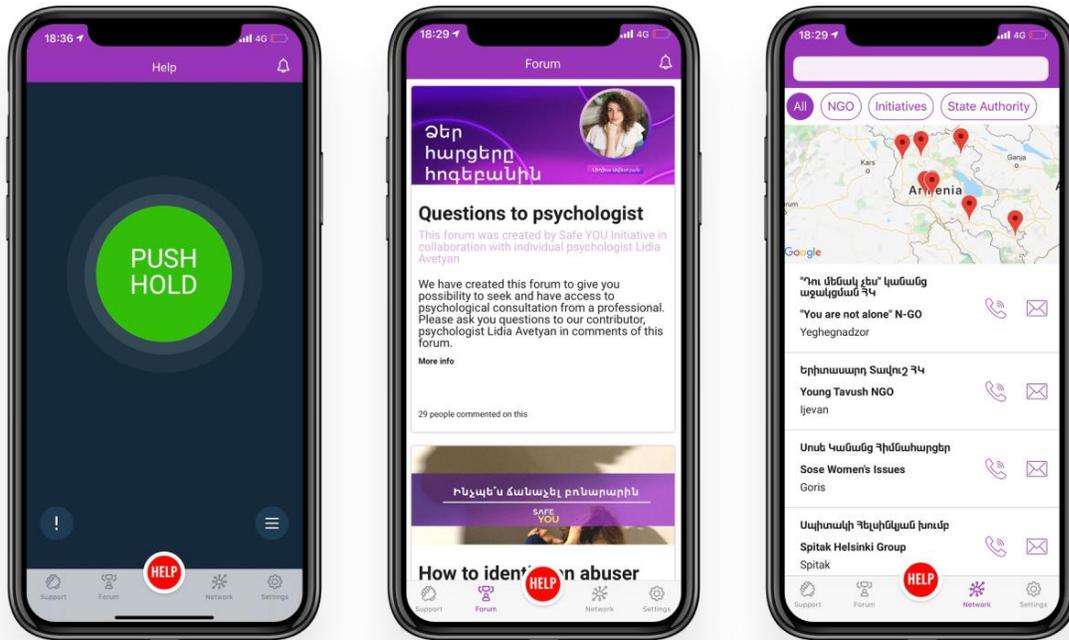
MARIAM TOROSYAN | DECEMBER 9 2020



When I was pregnant with my daughter, an elderly woman approached me in one of our family gatherings, and said to me: “Don’t worry, the second child will be a boy.”

In a patriarchal society like mine, girls are undervalued—even before their birth. That’s why I decided to focus my efforts on enhancing the status and role of girls and women in my society. The pursuit of addressing the problem of gender-based violence has turned into my life’s mission.

You may have heard about our project [Geeks against GBV](#), implemented by [Enterprise Incubator Foundation](#), a technology business incubator and IT development agency operating in Yerevan, Armenia. With our technical team, we developed a prototype for an innovative mobile app to address gender-based violence. The [Safe YOU Mobile App](#) allows users to seek help in emergency situations by sending free alert messages with the user’s geolocation to previously chosen personal contacts, women support nongovernmental organizations, state authorities, or the police. The app also offers forums for anonymous peer-to-peer discussions within the community and consultations with vetted professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, psychologists. We have been working with international counterparts to disseminate information about the app in Armenia.



The pandemic and the subsequent increase of domestic violence cases have proven once again the widespread nature of gender-based violence, cutting across developing and developed countries. That created a demand to for replicating and improving the app in other countries.

Our first request for cooperation came from one of Georgia’s leading women rights protection NGOs, [Union Sapari](#), which wanted the mobile app launched in its country. After weeks of technical development, translations, and design we successfully launched the app in the country, giving our Georgian partners a segregated database to manage the content of the app. This means that the content of the app, including forum posts, support services providers included in the network, in each country is different and managed by a local licensed partner.



Safe YOU team members:

Mariam Torosyan, Co-founder and CEO of IMIN and Safe YOU Mobile APP on the right and Lilit Shakhulyan, COO of IMIN, on the left.

We are also working with World Fair Trade Organization Asia to launch the App in more than five Asian countries. In addition, we are working with these partners to integrate women's economic empowerment tools and resources into the app.

Additionally, we are collaborating with local organizations in the field—women rights support NGOs, shelters, ombudsman office—and have been continuously onboarding them into the app's Network section, through which users can easily access and reach them.

In the past few months, the mobile app's operation in Armenia and Georgia has shown that it is indeed *a safe space for women*. To ensure the safety of our users, we have already "armed" the app with a security tool called Dual Pin that allows users to hide the real app. In addition, we are also currently working on another security tool called Camouflage Icon that will allow people to hide the app in a more user-friendly way.

The Safe YOU team is convinced that social problems can be tackled by innovative online solutions, therefore our current mission is to regularly improve the mobile app's functionality and to make it accessible in more countries. In this challenging journey, we need support and cooperation from activists and concerned parties all over the world, and most importantly with our fellow researchers and [SVRI/WBG award winners](#).



Family & Friends

Chose up to 3 people from your contact list. They will all get the automatic message simultaneously.



Service Contacts

Chose up to 3 NGOs, Government organizations and /or professionals from our verified partners. This can be organizations that you have already communicated with or ones that you think would be able to help. They will all get your message simultaneously.



Police

Enabling this optional setting will automatically send a message to a police station in your city.

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<https://www.facebook.com/safeyougeorgia> (Safe YOU Georgia)

Follow Safe YOU on Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/safeyou_app/?hl=ru

AUTHOR

MARIAM TOROSYAN | Co-founder and CEO of IMIN and Safe YOU Mobile APP