

## Advocacy communication on sexual violence in the workplace by Never Okay Project

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### ABSTRACT

**Sexual** violence in the workplace in Indonesia continues to occur due to various factors. Never Okay Project became one of the organizations that seeks advocacy communication to increase participation of the actors involved and to influence company policies regarding sexual violence. This study aims to explore the advocacy communication carried out by Never Okay Project on sexual violence in the workplace. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data within this research was obtained through interviews with the organization manager, employer, advocacy targets, and issue observers, as well as observations of advocacy communication contents shared through various channels. Data were analyzed using framework analysis technique (Ritchie et al., 2003). The results of this study show that Never Okay Project was formed as a platform to elevate the stories and experiences of survivors into something worth taking into account. In their efforts of advocacy communication, Never Okay Project is oriented towards workers' experiences in raising various issues related to sexual violence in the workplace, workers' experiences and rights, as well as the coverage in various work sectors. Collaboration with various stakeholders, as well as Never Okay Project's advocacy communication with employers, has implications for the formation and improvement of company policies regarding sexual violence in the workplace with more of a survivor's perspective. This research maps the position of Never Okay Project in raising issues, influencing policies, and developing public participation regarding the issue of sexual violence in the workplace through advocacy communications.

**Keywords:** Advocacy communication; sexual violence; policy; workplace; survivor's perspective

### *Komunikasi advokasi tentang kekerasan seksual di tempat kerja oleh Never Okay Project*

### ABSTRAK

**Kekerasan** seksual di tempat kerja di Indonesia terus terjadi akibat berbagai faktor. Never Okay Project menjadi salah satu organisasi yang mengupayakan komunikasi advokasi untuk meningkatkan partisipasi aktor-aktor yang terlibat serta memengaruhi kebijakan perusahaan terkait kekerasan seksual. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi komunikasi advokasi yang dilakukan oleh Never Okay Project tentang kekerasan seksual di tempat kerja. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Data dalam penelitian ini diperoleh melalui wawancara pada pengelola organisasi, pemberi kerja, sasaran advokasi, dan pengamat isu, serta observasi pada konten komunikasi advokasi yang dibagikan melalui berbagai saluran. Data dianalisis menggunakan teknik framework analysis (Ritchie et al., 2003). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Never Okay Project dibentuk sebagai wadah yang mengangkat cerita dan pengalaman penyintas menjadi sesuatu yang pantas diperhitungkan. Dalam mengupayakan komunikasi advokasinya, Never Okay Project berorientasi pada pengalaman pekerja dalam mengangkat ragam isu terkait kekerasan seksual di tempat kerja, pengalaman dan hak pekerja, serta cakupannya dalam berbagai sektor kerja. Kolaborasi dengan aktor-aktor yang terlibat serta komunikasi advokasi yang dilakukan Never Okay Project dengan pemberi kerja berimplikasi terhadap pembentukan dan perbaikan kebijakan perusahaan tentang kekerasan seksual di tempat kerja yang lebih berperspektif penyintas. Penelitian ini memetakan posisi Never Okay Project dalam mengangkat isu, memengaruhi kebijakan, serta mengembangkan partisipasi publik terkait isu kekerasan seksual di tempat kerja melalui komunikasi advokasi.

**Kata-kata kunci:** Komunikasi advokasi; kekerasan seksual; kebijakan; tempat kerja; perspektif penyintas

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**Submitted:** October 2023, **Revised:** February 2024, **Accepted:** April 2024, **Published:** April 2024

ISSN: 2548-3242 (printed), ISSN: 2549-0079 (online). Website: <http://jurnal.unpad.ac.id/manajemen-komunikasi>

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## INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence in various forms of violence and harassment in the workplace is still an important issue that continues to occur in various work sectors in Indonesia. In the period 2018 to 2020, more than a hundred cases of sexual violence and harassment in the workplace were found, which were reported to various parties (Damayanti et al., 2020). Komnas Perempuan's research results also found that of the 108 cases of violence in the world of work reported to Komnas Perempuan during 2021, there were eight cases of sexual violence which included sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and rape, that occurred in the work environment (Komnas Perempuan, 2022).

It is also a concern that of all victims, only around 5% reported incidents of sexual harassment they experienced to their companies' Human Resource Departments. Meanwhile, 55% of women and 79% of men who were victims chose to remain silent because they did not know what to do (The Never Okay Project & SAFEnet, 2020). The crucial problem that allows the increase in cases of sexual violence in the workplace is that most companies still view the cases as an individual problem that needs to be resolved outside of work, not as human rights violations that are closely related to the ongoing work system (Komnas Perempuan, 2022).

Since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, many companies from different work sectors applied online working systems, more commonly known as *work from home*. However, even with minimal physical contact between employees, this does not rule out the possibility of sexual harassment in the world of work. The digital rights advocacy organization, SAFEnet recorded 620 reported cases of online gender-based violence (OGBV) throughout 2020, which is around ten times more than the previous year (SAFEnet, 2021).

Strong patriarchal culture within the work environment in Indonesia is a factor that causes sexual harassment in the workplace to occur repeatedly (Dwiyanti, 2014). Work atmospheres in Indonesia that are still brimming with inequality of power relations cause difficulties in the prevention and handling of sexual violence cases in the workplace. The results of research on 117 cases of sexual violence and harassment in the workplace noted that 62.39% of the perpetrators were superiors or senior colleagues (Damayanti et al., 2020).

Communities and organizations initiate advocacy communication (Cornejo, 2022) to influence decision-makers to develop better policies regarding the issue. In this case, the decision-maker is not limited to the formal government system. It can also apply to policies or programs from various institutions, such as

NGOs, field ministries, internal agencies, or any type of organization where decision-making is carried out.

In implementing advocacy communication, social media is one of the channels through which the public, including survivors of sexual violence, voice their concerns about the reality they face. Movements such as #MeToo, which focuses on sexual violence, #WhyIStayed for domestic violence, and #GirlsLikeUs for transgender injustice, take advantage of the convenience of social media to tell stories of survivors' personal experiences as a form of testimony on the existence of gender injustice and oppression. Digital culture presents new ways for people to share experiences, participate directly in campaign efforts, organize collective action, recruit and mobilize groups, and form petitions more easily with one-click reach (Milestone & Meyer, 2021). Social media is used as much as possible by advocacy-initiating groups to increase participation, considering the limited resources available in forming campaigns (Ratnasari et al., 2021).

Based on said context, the existence of The Never Okay Project became interesting and important. This research aims to explore the advocacy communication carried out by The Never Okay Project regarding sexual violence in the workplace, starting from the form of advocacy communication utilized in raising

the issue, the actors involved in advocacy communication, and efforts to influence company policy through communication with employers.

Several previous studies discuss cases of sexual violence and harassment in the workplace from various perspectives, including cases within the law enforcement agency (Dwiyanti, 2014) and explaining the forms of legal protection provided to victims (Kamarulah, 2021). Previous research with The Never Okay Project as the research subject focused on the discourse on The Never Okay Project's website about sexual violence against women workers (Setiawan & Farida, 2020).

In Indonesia, there is little research on advocacy communication, especially those that focus on the issue of gender-based violence. Previous research on advocacy communication carried out about the influence of digital advocacy on the policy-making process regarding the election (Aulia & Kusumasari, 2022), advocacy communication for fact clarification of hoax news (Wiryawan et al., 2021), social worker advocacy for victims of sexual violence in disaster situations (Anisa & Santoso, 2020), women's advocacy efforts through digital media (Maryani & Adiprasetio, 2017; Rizky & Mar'iyah, 2021), and the role of social media in digital activism and advocacy against online gender-based violence (Ratnasari

et al., 2021).

One of theoretical concepts underlying this research is the Pyramid Model of Social Media-Based Advocacy (Guo & Saxton, 2014), a relationship formation model driven by mobilization that aims to see how organizations can form and mobilize network support through communicative relationship formation strategies. This model consists of three hierarchical stages, explaining the practical stages of organizations in carrying out advocacy communications to achieve the planned advocacy goals.

These three stages are formed into a pyramid considering the number of messages in the early stages compared to later ones. However, all three 'stages' can co-occur, depending on the relationships established with particular constituent groups at a particular

time. Advocacy organizations must be able to continuously update their advocacy strategies in accordance with developments in issue conditions and other influencing factors.

First stage, Reaching Out to People. An organization that carries out advocacy communications must always try to reach new audiences, starting with analyzing existing problems, policies regarding the problem issue, the actors involved, and other existing efforts to influence policy formation. Based on said analysis, the organization reaches out and raises awareness regarding the issues to potential and existing supporters in an accurate and fact-based manner. The advocacy tactics generally used at this stage are distributing informative content for public education.

Second stage: Keeping the Flame Alive. Once a number of supporters have been gathered,



Source: Guo & Saxton, 2014

**Figure 1 Pyramid Model of Social Media-Based Advocacy**

the next stage is to retain existing constituencies, keeping the supporters' enthusiasm burning to continue participating in the advocacy activities. Advocacy communication at this stage focuses on the relational function, namely, building close relationships through dialogue and community formation.

Third stage: Stepping Up to Action. At the right time, the final stage is to motivate and mobilize supporters to act. Taking action is designed at the last stage because it culminates achieving advocacy goals. It is not uncommon for digital-based organizations to direct their supporters to carry out the third stage outside the digital scope to obtain greater real results and avoid accusations of 'slacktivism' (Milestone & Meyer, 2021), namely the assumption that the advocacy carried out is 'lazy' and did not obtain real participation from supporters.

In a legal context, advocacy is "an effort to influence public policy through various forms of persuasive communication" (Cangara, 2013). Policy advocacy plays a role in policy formation, whether initiated by individuals or groups, to bring about common interests, specifically the people's (Aulia & Kusumasari, 2022). Advocacy has a very important role for nonprofit organizations, service providers, and other organizations to be able to contribute to democratic governance by representing citizens' interests and promoting changes in

policies (Guo & Saxton, 2014).

Policy can be understood within the framework of legal system analysis, which includes three aspects: 1) Legal content, which includes legal rules or policy substance adopted through legislative and jurisdictional processes; 2) Legal structure, referring to law-making institutions and law enforcement officials, and; 3) Legal culture, namely social behavior and public opinion in society that shapes the law (Cangara, 2013). Policy advocacy is a form of political mobilization to increase human and group power to make institutions more responsive (Rizky & Mar'iyah, 2021).

Advocacy communication is defined as a multilevel process consisting of various communication tactics through various channels, including conscious or unconscious, explicit or implicit, verbal or nonverbal communication to challenge attitudes, actions, practices, and policies that negatively affect minority groups (Cornejo, 2022). Advocacy communication acts as a strategic intervention with a clear political position, without pretense of neutrality, and against hegemonic domination in assessing social conditions (Wilkins, 2014).

Digital advocacy carried out through social media has several advantages, including the element of democratization in social media, which allows organizations, communities, and individuals to be involved in forming

communities for a common goal (Brady et al., 2015), facilitating easier engagement with stakeholders as an effort to gather support to achieve advocacy goals (Guo & Saxton, 2014) as well as the reachability and openness of digital audiences so that the formation of relationships with audiences is more efficient (Figenschou & Fredheim, 2020).

Sexual violence, whether verbal, emotional, visual, physical, or sexual, is defined as interpersonal, organizational, or politically oriented abuse perpetrated against a person because of their gender identity, sexual orientation, or position in the hierarchy of a male-dominated social system such as the family, military organizations, or the workforce (Gamble & Gamble, 2021). The term 'gender-based violence' is also often used to describe violence that harms someone due to the person's gender. The term gender-based violence as an umbrella term is considered more inclusive because it takes into account violence that can also affect other minority gender expressions and identities besides women due to unequal gender relations in society (Kirkegaard, 2020).

A workplace is defined as "a place where work is or is usually carried out for a business, including all places where a worker goes or is likely to be while working, including vehicles, ships, aircraft, or other moving structures; and any waters and installations on land, and any

bed or surface of any water bodies," (Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, 2021). Sexual violence in the workplace occurs due to systematic inappropriate treatment of individuals who are considered subordinate, which severely impacts victims in social, psychological, and psychosomatic aspects (Einarsen et al., 2020). Not infrequently, women and other gender minorities are forced to endure sexual harassment as part of their work activities; they see it as a personal responsibility to face this as a consequence of working to avoid bad experiences that might occur if they report the incident (De Vuyst, 2020).

Workers in lower positions are often faced with *quid pro quo* (something for something) sexual harassment, where sexual harassment is done by someone in a higher position who uses their power to manipulate the consent of the victim by offering a promotion or salary in return for certain sexual matters (Awaliyah, 2016; The Never Okay Project & Scoop Asia, 2018). Often, companies fail to see the possible organizational impacts of sexual violence in the workplace and consider cases of sexual violence in the workplace as an individual problem, so companies often do nothing to address them (Dwiyanti, 2014; Komnas Perempuan, 2022).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach



with a case study method (Schoch, 2019) on The Never Okay Project's advocacy communications on sexual violence in the workplace. The results of case study research have the property of 'transferability', which allows other researchers to apply the principles and lessons learned from one case to other situations, which is different from the generalizations found in quantitative studies. A case is specifically defined and has specificities that differentiate it from others. In addition, the case is multi-sourced, where data can be obtained from various sources, including organizational managers, advocacy targets, stakeholders, and issue observers. In this research, the case in question is advocacy communication carried out by The Never Okay Project regarding sexual violence in the workplace as an effort to influence company policy.

Data was collected through interviews and observation. In-depth interviews were conducted with several informants to reveal various data related to advocacy communications by The Never Okay Project on sexual violence in the workplace from different perspectives. Interviews were conducted in the period June–July 2023 with Imelda Riris Damayanti, Project Lead and initiator of The Never Okay Project; four informants as advocacy targets, namely EF, TL, CM, and R; and HR Manager and HR Executive of PT Gushcloud Indonesia Group

as an employer that has collaborated with The Never Okay Project to conduct advocacy communication. To complement the perspective outside the parties who are in direct contact with the advocacy communications by The Never Okay Project, researchers interviewed Helga Worotitjan, an activist and survivor of sexual violence who is also active in survivor assistance efforts.

Observations were made on advocacy communication content shared via the Instagram account @neverokayproject, X account @neverokayprjct, website [www.neverokayproject.org](http://www.neverokayproject.org), and YouTube The Never Okay Project from September 2022 to July 2023. The time limitation was based on the context and adequacy of the data for analysis.

Gathered data was then analyzed using framework analysis technique (Ritchie et al., 2003) to classify and organize data based on themes, concepts, and key categories. The first stage, *familiarizing oneself with the data set*, starts with getting used to the data set, such as interview transcripts, observation notes, pictures, or videos. The second stage is to *develop a thematic framework*, drawing themes, subthemes, and categories from collected data. The third stage is *indexing*, labels, or applying thematic codes recorded from the previous stage to all data material. The fourth stage, *data charting*, is pulling data and grouping it in

categorical charts according to theme of each piece of data. The fifth stage, *summarizing descriptive accounts*, is forming descriptive conclusions from the combined data in the same category and improving the category index based on the suitability of the data. The sixth stage, *developing explanatory accounts*, is where the researchers identify patterns, relationships, groupings, and explanations of the grouped data, interpret the results, and present them in a narrative of research results (Rapley, 2021).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Never Okay Project was initially founded in 2017 as an anonymous platform for survivors of sexual violence in the workplace to share their experiences through a website. This initiative stems from the experience of the initiator, Alvin Nicola, who received a call from his friend who had experienced sexual harassment by their boss at their workplace at that time. When said friend reported to the human resource department, they were asked to normalize the situation if they did not want to be discharged. Imelda Riris Damayanti and Alvin Nicola, as initiators of the Never Okay Project, saw the obstacles faced by survivors of sexual violence cases in Indonesia, especially in the workplace, where other people often doubt the truth of survivors' stories. Therefore,

The Never Okay Project's initial mission was to highlight the unheard stories of survivors of sexual violence in the workplace.

The Never Okay Project started utilizing Instagram @neverokayproject alongside the website in mid-January 2018 and later on other social media, namely YouTube, X, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Through social media, The Never Okay Project seeks to attract more supporters to be involved in the advocacy communications they carry out. Since then, The Never Okay Project has continued to develop by its manifesto, namely as the first mission-driven initiative in Indonesia that works to support communities and institutions to create a work environment that is free from sexual violence. The phrase '*Never Okay*' clearly states a form of resistance to the normalization of sexual harassment and violence in the workplace, emphasizing that all forms of sexual violence and harassment should not be tolerated.

Since its formation, The Never Okay Project has specifically focused on the issue of sexual violence in the workplace, which surely has a different complexity than sexual violence discussions in other conditions. The issue of sexual violence in the workplace is not just about sexual coercion that occurs in the office but also considers many aspects and dimensions.

One of themes regarding the issue raised quite a lot by the Never Okay Project is the



inequality of power relations, in this case, related to the relationship between workers at different job positions. Surveys conducted by The Never Okay Project show that the number one most common perpetrators of sexual violence in the workplace are superiors or more senior colleagues (Damayanti et al., 2022; International Labour Organization, 2022; The Never Okay Project & SAFEnet, 2020). Inequality of power relations in the workplace is one of the factors in the occurrence of *quid pro quo* or ‘something for something’ sexual harassment (Awaliyah, 2016; International Labour Organization, 2022; The Never Okay Project & Scoop Asia, 2018), which occurs when workers in higher positions take advantage of their power to manipulate consent of the victim by offering a promotion, granting wages or leave rights, contract extensions, or defending the victim’s job position in exchange for certain sexual rewards.

The work environment, which is now exceedingly changing to remote working or hybrid workplaces, does not prevent the increasing number of reported cases of online gender-based violence or OGBV (Muhajir, 2023), including in the form of doxing, a form of cyberbullying that uses sensitive or secret information, statements, or records for the harassment exposure; non-consensual intimate image of distribution (NCII), namely

the distribution of intimate content without permission; sexual blackmail, and much more (Awais KBGO, 2022). One of The Never Okay Project’s webinar activities entitled “In the Real World or the Virtual World, the Impact is No Different” seeks to invite the public to see the impact that survivors of sexual violence in the online workplace have to experience, which is just as awful as in offline working conditions. The Never Okay Project invited Kristi Poerwandari, a psychology lecturer and founder of the Pulih Foundation, and Rory Asyari, a news presenter and social activist, as speakers in the webinar to discuss how OGBV survivors must face revictimization and tend to be more vulnerable to criminalization due to their reporting as victims. Similar to offline work conditions, OGBV survivors in the workplace also experience feelings of threat and loss of security when using online media, even outside of work activities.

In several surveys released, The Never Okay Project also uses slogans such as “It Can Happen to Anyone” and “Everyone Can Become a Victim” as an emphasis that workers with any gender identity, work relationship, job title, or work sector can become victims of sexual violence in the workplace. One of The Never Okay Project’s surveys found that 1 in 4 men had been victims of sexual harassment while working from home, yet 79% of male

survivors felt confused and responded to incidents of harassment with silence (The Never Okay Project & SAFEnet, 2020). In the webinar mentioned previously, the topic of male survivors was also discussed with speaker Rory Asyari regarding the challenges for men when demanding rights or justice as survivors of violence and harassment in the workplace or as male allies who participate in advocating for policies regarding the issue.

ILO Convention No. 190, as one of the legal instruments campaigned by The Never Okay Project, takes into account all types of work and workers, namely individuals who work regardless of contract status, including those in training, internships, volunteers, job applicants, and employers, and can be applied to all sectors work, public or private employees, formal or informal, in urban or rural areas (ILO Convention No. 190 - Violence and Harassment, 2019). So far, The Never Okay Project's offline advocacy communication activities are still within the scope of the formal work sector, namely through capacity building in collaboration with companies in Jakarta due to the limited resources and the absence of a specific strategy to reach other companies outside Jakarta or Java and employers from informal work sectors. However, through online communication channels, The Never Okay Project continues to highlight the experiences

of workers and survivors of sexual violence in the workplace in quite diverse work sectors. Through social media content, The Never Okay Project raises the issue of sexual violence in the workplace on domestic workers in medical, educational, security, and creative sector jobs.

The Never Okay Project also raises other themes that do not directly discuss sexual violence in the workplace but are problems in the workplace as part of workers' experiences, including themes of gender discrimination in the workplace, male survivors, workers' wellbeing, and workers' rights such as leave rights and wage rights. In the content "Same Work Expenses, Why Are Salaries Different?" on June 9, 2023, The Never Okay Project discussed the monthly wage gap between male and female workers in Indonesia, reaching 26.4% in 2022 (Lubis, 2022). Commemorating Kartini Day, The Never Okay Project also highlighted the challenges that Indonesian women still have to face regarding discrimination and gender stereotypes, especially for working mothers who have to face double challenges of balancing work duties with domestic duties, which are not divided equally within the household. The Never Okay Project raised theme of workers' rights by using the moment of Labor Day 2023 to raise awareness of the right to menstrual leave and maternity leave by reviewing Law Number (No). 6 of 2023 on Job Creation. Through

themes like this, The Never Okay Project tries to adapt themes to the target audience of its advocacy, workers in Indonesia.

Imelda stated that substantively, there is no difference between the messages conveyed in The Never Okay Project's online and offline advocacy communication. However, the approaches used to reach advocacy targets are different. The Never Okay Project utilizes emotional and rational approaches simultaneously in conveying messages about sexual violence in the workplace. Combining emotional appeals with a rational approach to communication can produce more effective attitude change than using both appeals (Casais & Pereira, 2021).

The use of real-world examples, quotes from survivors' stories, and depictions of the experiences of workers/survivors shows an emotional approach to attract attention and help the audience understand the experiences of survivors from a psychological perspective. However, the campaign team is now more careful in using survivors' stories, avoiding triggering trauma from survivors who would also be exposed to The Never Okay Project's contents.

Surveys, as an academic approach to advocacy communication, are a way to map the workers' experiences regarding sexual violence in the workplace based on data. The results of

The Never Okay Project's surveys in recent years have become the basis for discussions on the many forms of advocacy communication activities that The Never Okay Project carried out, including preparing social media content, creating posters and infographics, and implementing capacity buildings in companies.

The Never Okay Project seeks to construct advocacy messages from a survivor's perspective, namely what survivors of sexual violence in the workplace feel and experience. The general public and stakeholders can understand the urgent need for a policy that can protect and provide justice for survivors. The organization seeks to fight a legal culture that is still steeped in victim-blaming, the attitude of blaming victims for the sexual violence they have experienced. In the contents created, The Never Okay Project uses persuading words such as "Let us support victims", "Empathize with victims", or "Do not blame victims" which explicitly invite readers to stand in support towards survivors of sexual violence. The Never Okay Project also creates content aimed at stakeholders, specifically employers, providing recommendations for creating a safer work environment. One of which was by constructing a digital guidebook on forming support groups for survivors of sexual violence in the workplace (Jacob et al., 2023). Through advocacy communications, The Never Okay

Project seeks to fight for the rights of survivors by forming narratives and supporting policies that support the welfare of survivors as members of society.

Challenges in using digital communication channels are found in terms of upload frequency. The Never Okay Project, a volunteer-based organization, is limited in distributing tasks and responsibilities for all volunteers. Upload frequency is also hampered by considerations about the quality of the content. The Never Okay Project realizes that its contents can be consumed by the general public, policymakers, and survivors. Therefore, aspects of the content shared must consider the level of audience receptivity and the sensitivity of the survivor audience beyond the urgency and audience's interest in the content's issue.

The Never Okay Project also takes an academic advocacy communication approach (Cornejo, 2022) through public surveys that differentiate The Never Okay Project from several other feminist organizations in Indonesia. The Never Okay Project initiated surveys in collaboration with several media and partners, including in 2018 with Scoop Asia News (The Never Okay Project & Scoop Asia, 2018), in 2019 with the International Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (The Never Okay Project & IBCWE, 2019), in *work from home* conditions in 2020 with Southeast Asia Freedom

of Expression (The Never Okay Project & SAFEnet, 2020), and in 2022 with the Jakarta office of International Labour Organization to support the ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 (International Labour Organization, 2022). Other surveys were conducted by The Never Okay Project to map the phenomenon of sexual violence in the workplace that occurred in the 2018-2020 period (Damayanti et al., 2020) and to monitor cases of sexual violence in the world of work during the 2021 period (Damayanti et al., 2022).

Offline advocacy communication is also being conducted, one of which is in the form of capacity building, which is divided into three types based on the advocacy targets, which are for company employees, certain public groups, and internal ones for The Never Okay Project volunteers. Commemorating the 16th Day of Anti-Gender Based Violence in 2019, The Never Okay Project became one of the collaborators in the campaign carried out by the Indonesia Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (IBCWE) and PT. Transportasi Jakarta (Transjakarta), PT. BlueBird Tbk, and Berakar Komunikasi. Together with these parties, IBCWE formed 16 Sexual Harassment Signs, distributed digitally and offline via social media by placing posters on Transjakarta buses containing campaign material based on the results of The Never Okay Project's survey

from the previous year. Through these signs, it is hoped that the public, specifically targeting workers in Jakarta, can identify types of sexual harassment, speak up, and act decisively whenever they experience or witness cases of sexual harassment (Lambe, 2019).

Organizations cannot stand alone in achieving advocacy goals. It requires the participation of actors from various fields to support the communication carried out (Ratnasari et al., 2021). The Never Okay Project, as a volunteer-based organization, is divided into the knowledge management team, which is tasked with carrying out surveys and research; the campaign team, which focuses on implementing digital campaigns; and the partnership team, which is responsible for being a liaison between The Never Okay Project and external parties.

Based on the interviews with several volunteers, social media content is the main channel that introduces volunteers to the existence of The Never Okay Project. Since attending one of the Never Okay Project's webinars, TL has been interested in taking on other advocacy activities and then volunteered in September – October 2022 as part of the Content Creator team. Another informant, CM, has participated in the Knowledge Management team since 2020 and is now part of the Partnership team, saying that The Never Okay

Project has a tremendous impact and provides great knowledge.

It needs to be emphasized that The Never Okay Project focuses on campaign and advocacy activities and cannot act as an agency providing assistance services. Nevertheless, The Never Okay Project continues optimizing efforts to assist survivors who wish to seek assistance. The assistance provided goes as far as providing a list of institutions and individuals providing psychological assistance and legal assistance providers who are partners of The Never Okay Project, such as Kolektif Advokat Keadilan Gender (KAKG) and several which are network-based such as the Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan (LBH APIK).

There are various types of collaboration that The Never Okay Project forms with other stakeholders, including as a community partner, where The Never Okay Project helps to promote certain initiatives formed by other organizations, and as a knowledge partner, where The Never Okay Project is invited as a speaker or to hold activities such as workshops, offline and online seminars, Etc. The Never Okay Project has collaborated with other organizations in the past year to hold online activities such as Twitter Spaces, Instagram Live, and others.

On September 6, 2022, The Never Okay Project collaborated with HRD Bacot,



a discussion forum page about workers' experiences, *Awas KBGO*, an initiative from *SAFENet* to eradicate online gender-based violence, and mental health advocate *Benny Siau* in Twitter Spaces entitled "Healing but Meeting: The Impact of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work". This activity discusses how sexual violence has a heavy psychological impact on survivors at work who have to face victim blaming and online gender-based violence.

Another form of collaboration is a partnership between The Never Okay Project and the Indonesian International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2022. In this collaboration, The Never Okay Project acts as an official partner to promote ILO Convention

190, where they designed programs such as surveys, petitions, online campaigns, webinars, and survey results launched in September 2022. Several key opinion leaders were invited as speakers at the survey launch, including actor *Hannah Al Rashid*, who actively supports gender equality issues. In all contents within the campaign, the Never Okay Project seeks support from advocacy targets through a petition supporting the C190 ratification. As of September 2023, the online petition started by The Never Okay Project has reached more than sixteen thousand signatures, supporting the ratification of C190 as a legal instrument against violence and harassment in the world of work.

The Never Okay Project also involves alternative media as media partners, either by



Source: YouTube Never Okay Project, 2022

Figure 2 Live Streaming of ILO x NOP Survey Launch



inviting the media to survey results launchings or providing briefings for the media to write articles if the media feels that the survey and activities carried out are newsworthy. The Never Okay Project collaborates more with alternative media than mainstream media in its advocacy communications, as alternative media can become a bridge that provides opportunities for certain issues in society, specifically minority groups, to become part of the public agenda (Buyens & Aelst, 2021).

The Never Okay Project has collaborated quite a few times with alternative media such as Magdalene and Project Multatuli. In October 2023, KBR Prime, a podcast platform from Kantor Berita Radio, was holding a podcast program with 20 collaborators consisting of civil society organizations and individuals with different issues, such as environmental issues, gender issues, and youth issues, including The Never Okay Project as one of the collaborators.

Advocacy communication carried out at various levels with various stakeholders ultimately focuses on one main goal, namely to challenge attitudes, actions, practices, and policies that have a negative impact on certain groups of society (Cornejo, 2022). Since The Never Okay Project was founded, especially in 2018 when they launched their first survey, employers from various institutions have often contacted the Never Okay Project team

to design and conduct capacity building for companies internally. The Never Okay Project is also often contacted to provide consultation on policy-making or to help disseminate existing regulations regarding sexual violence in the workplace. Imelda stated that requests generally come from multinational companies and nonprofit organizations, which tend to be more aware of the urgency of the issue.

Capacity building is an effort to raise workers' awareness of the right to a safe working environment, how to identify types of sexual violence in the world of work, and how to respond to cases from the victim's and witness' sides. Apart from capacity building for employees, several institutions specifically hold training of trainers with special task forces as participants.

In 2019, The Never Okay Project collaborated with the Indonesia Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (IBCWE), which had 14 member companies, some of which were multinational. Initially, The Never Okay Project conducted an online survey that included over 6,000 online and 125 offline respondents to examine the situation in member companies' workplaces (The Never Okay Project & IBCWE, 2019). The survey was then followed up by conducting an HR Forum, where The Never Okay Project held two meetings with the fourteen-member companies to present

the survey results and discuss the needs of these companies. The survey results were then used as a basis for companies to update or create regulations in their respective companies.

We try to convey the narrative that we appreciate all institutions and companies that are willing to start. So, we try to appreciate that even though they are starting from zero, they do not have regulations [regarding sexual violence in the workplace]. They only want to make one seminar. We are trying to convey that [the initiative] is a good thing; starting to show commitment is a good thing (Interview with Imelda Riris Damayanti, June 27, 2023).

Quite a few employers are reluctant to take the initiative to carry out advocacy communications regarding sexual violence in the workplace because most are afraid of raising allegations or exposing cases that could lead to organizational losses. The Never Okay Project seeks to overcome these challenges by appreciating every effort from employers, even if the efforts start from ground zero. Imelda stated that these initiatives need to be heard because they will be the starting point that will lead the company to regulatory changes and other larger efforts.

On January 16, 2023, The Never Okay Project team visited Gushcloud Indonesia's office in South Jakarta to hold capacity building at the request of Gushcloud Indonesia

to increase awareness among employees at the company. All 121 workers at Gushcloud Indonesia attended the activity, including support teams such as office boys, couriers, and securities, who were able to attend in hopes that all employees would gain the same level of understanding of the issue. The topics discussed are basic information about sexual harassment with a focus on the workplace, including an introduction to the characteristics of sexual harassment, how to categorize sexual harassment in the workplace, and how to handle it. The HR team saw the enthusiasm of employees who share experiences, whether in previous offices, heard from friends, or one is my client.

After the capacity building, the HR team conducted a satisfaction survey, which showed that almost all employees were satisfied and provided positive feedback on the capacity building. In the survey, Gushcloud Indonesia's HR team also measured how employees viewed the classification of sexual harassment and violence in the workplace, which are considered mild, moderate, and severe harassment. The classification obtained from the survey became the basis for updating the existing company regulations, which were admitted to be too general.

Capacity building, survey results, and discussions with several employees helped the

HR team formulate a more detailed regulation regarding the categorization of sexual harassment and violence in the workplace and the penalties given for each category. The team also occasionally consults with colleagues at the Never Okay Project by providing updates and asking for feedback regarding the results obtained.

The new company regulation also oversees a better reporting system with a whistleblowing team that includes the HR and Legal team with whom employees can share matters they face regarding sexual violence in the workplace with a confidentiality guarantee. Gushcloud Indonesia's HR and Legal team has socialized the renewed regulations to all employees and received a good reaction. The HR team also brings awareness to newly recruited employees at the induction stage regarding sexual harassment regulations. The capacity building carried out by Gushcloud Indonesia with The Never Okay Project last January was a kick-off, and there will be follow-up events for employees to build a deeper understanding of this issue.

As an observer, Helga believes that the good news is that initiatives are now starting to emerge in several companies to include codes of ethics with clauses regarding sexual harassment in the workplace. Unfortunately, this is still not evenly found in all work sectors. Many companies from

various work sectors still fail to see how sexual violence can affect employee performance, leading to other losses for the company. Helga believes that advocacy communications carried out by organizations such as The Never Okay Project have a big influence on the development of policies that support more adequate handling of cases of sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.

This [kind of effort], like the ones carried out by the friends at The Never Okay Project, is very important. Because the campaign function is significant, the advocacy function is also significant. In fact, I urge the growth of more new 'The Never Okay Projects' (Interview with Helga Worotitjan, June 19, 2023).

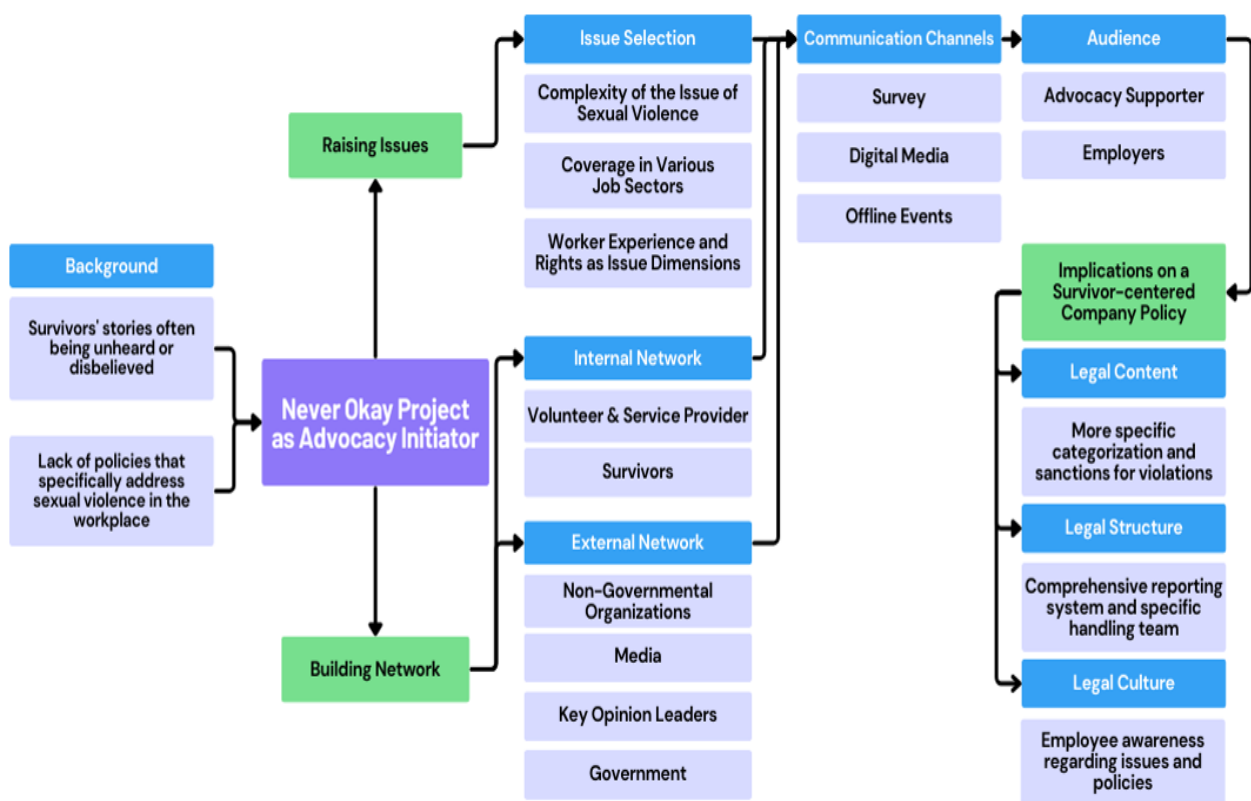
Improvements in the substance of a policy alone are not enough if the management and legal culture prevailing in society do not support the enforcement of the policy. In this context, advocacy can be directed not only at formal structural institutions but also at cultural improvement. Advocacy communication acts as a tool for social transformation, and advocacy communication is not only aimed at influencing the formation of policies and legal structures but also at community self-empowerment. Advocacy communication considers stakeholders, from policymakers to the community, to be able to produce policy changes, not only in what is written in the policy but also in how the policy is

presented and implemented as an instrument that is beneficial for social life.

Researchers concluded the advocacy communication on sexual violence in the workplace by The Never Okay Project through a model shown in Figure 3. This model was adapted from the Social Media-Based Advocacy Pyramid Model (Guo & Saxton, 2014), which has three main stages in advocacy communication, which, although described hierarchically, can co-occur. Researchers formed this model to map the aspects that build advocacy communications created by the Never Okay Project about changes in company policies regarding sexual violence in the workplace.

The Never Okay Project carries out

advocacy communications based on problems from two main points of view, namely: 1) Survivors' experiences, where stories of sexual violence survivors' experiences in the workplace are often not heard or not believed, and 2) Existing policies, namely the lack of policies at various levels that specifically address the issue. Based on this, The Never Okay Project raises issues through various forms of communication by paying attention to selecting issues and forming messages by the goals and objectives of advocacy. Meanwhile, networks are formed internally and externally, with the actors supporting advocacy communication. The advocacy communication by the Never Okay Project ultimately had implications for



Source: Research Results, 2023

**Figure 3 Model of Advocacy Communication on Sexual Violence in the Workplace by Never Okay Project**

the formation and improvement of company policies from a survivor perspective, which were reviewed from three aspects, namely the policy's content, implementation, and culture. Advocacy communication considers stakeholders from policymakers to the community to be able to produce policy changes, not only in what is written in the policy but also in how the policy is presented and implemented as an instrument that is beneficial for social life.

## CONCLUSION

The lack of specific data and organizations that specifically discuss the experiences of workers in Indonesia regarding sexual violence in the workplace encouraged the initiators to form The Never Okay Project as a forum for raising awareness and documenting survivors' stories regarding this issue. With the phrase 'Never Okay', The Never Okay Project aims to invite and support communities and institutions to work together to fight sexual violence in the workplace.

The Never Okay Project raises issues dynamically by selecting specific issues related to sexual violence in the workplace, coverage of issues in various work sectors, as well as workers' experiences and rights as dimensions of the issue. Advocacy messages are constructed using an emotional-rational approach, adjusting to the issues on trend and narratives from a

survivor's perspective. The Never Okay Project utilizes forms of advocacy communication such as informative content on various social media platforms, the formation of surveys and petitions, as well as offline and online seminars.

Collaboration in advocacy communication about sexual violence in the workplace is carried out with volunteers, survivors, and survivors' companions, advocacy targets, key opinion leaders, alternative media, and other organizations. The Never Okay Project seeks to build and strengthen networks with the actors involved to achieve advocacy goals. The Never Okay Project carried out communication and capacity-building activities as a form of collaboration with employers to improve company policies in terms of policy content, structure, and culture related to sexual violence in the workplace with more of a survivor's perspective.

The Never Okay Project, as an advocacy organization regarding sexual violence in the workplace, can continue to strive to increase participation in advocacy targets by holding more offline activities and forming communities where audiences can interact with each other in order to support advocacy goals. Future researchers on similar topics can expand the perspective of survivors of sexual violence in the workplace as part of advocacy targets as well as from relevant government institutions as



stakeholders involved in the formation of public policy.

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