UNDERSTANDING ICT LAWS, POLICY AND GENDER.

Gender perspective in policy and methodologies to assess policy with a gender perspective

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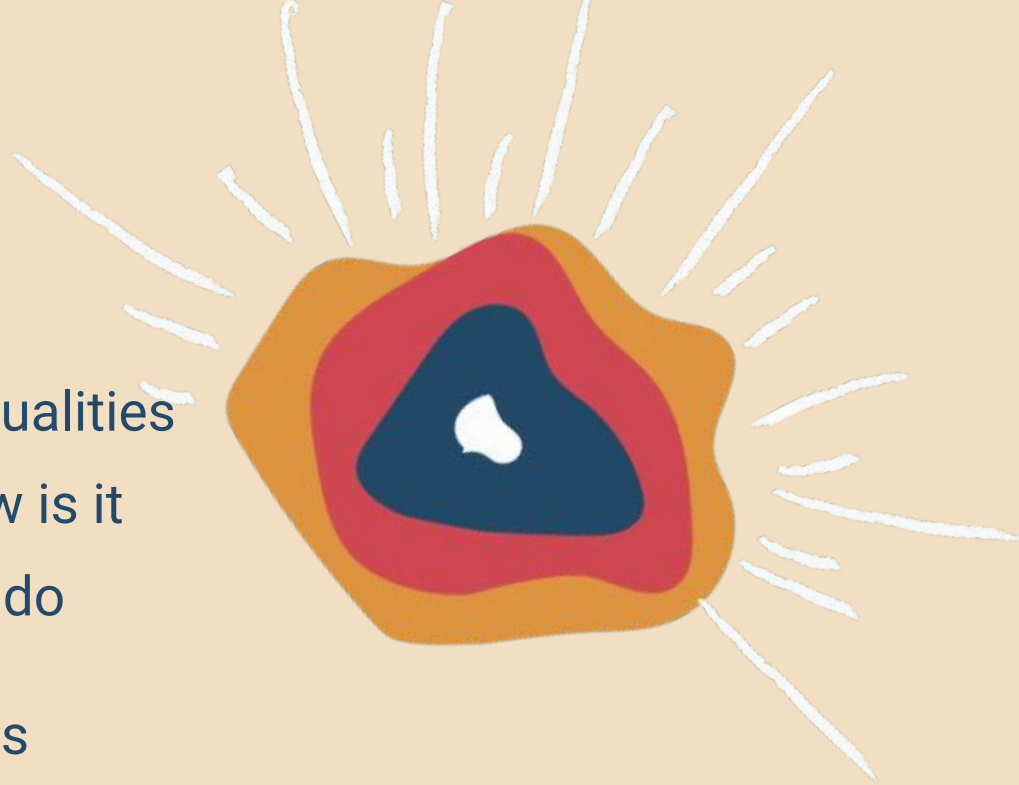
APC SPACE programme
11th October 2021

Agenda



A) How do we identify the policy problem of digital inequalities with a focus on gender
   - what is the extent of the digital gender divide and how is it measured
B) what are ICT laws, Policies and Regulations and how do they relate to Gender ?
   - A review of some legislations and the gaps
C) How to map and understand the various stakeholders required
   - What are the spaces for influence- WF, APC A4AI, feminist organisations are working etc
D) Making the persuasive argument -
   - Tools, framework and skills (this will include methodologies)
E) Incorporating gender in the policy development process and REACT Framework

•

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM ?

How to identify the problem of digital inequalities

Digital inequalities fall along

Gender

Age

Geography

Income levels

Race

What comes to mind when we think about Gender ?

- Binary, Intersectional?

- Gender is used to describe the characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed, while sex refers to those that are biologically determined. People are born female or male, but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. This learned behaviour makes up gender identity and determines gender roles- *WHO Regional office for Europe*

“Women and girls represent half of the world’s population and, therefore, also half of its potential. Gender equality, besides being a fundamental human right, is essential to achieve peaceful societies, with full human potential and sustainable development.”- UN

WHAT IS THE DIGITAL GENDER DIVIDE AND HOW IS IS CALCULATED ?

ITU and GSMA define the gap as the difference in the internet penetration rate between men and women, as a proportion of the internet penetration rate for men:

% of men using the internet – % of women using the internet / % of men using the internet

By Using a women-centered perspective we can more accurately understand how many more women need to come online in order to reach gender parity .Feminist centred :

% of men using the internet – % of women using the internet / % of women using the internet

(Webfoundation/A4AI)

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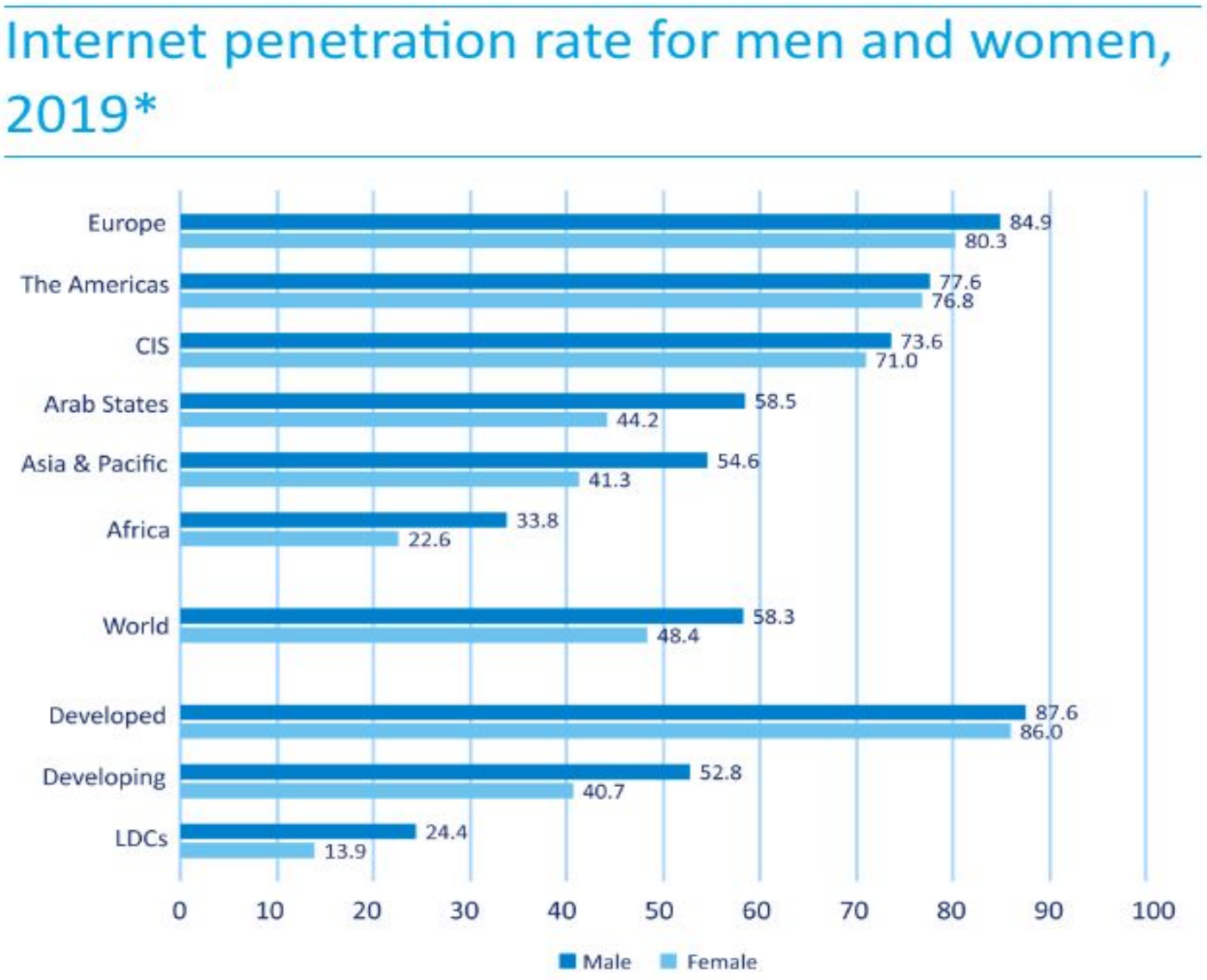
A Persistent Digital Gender Gap



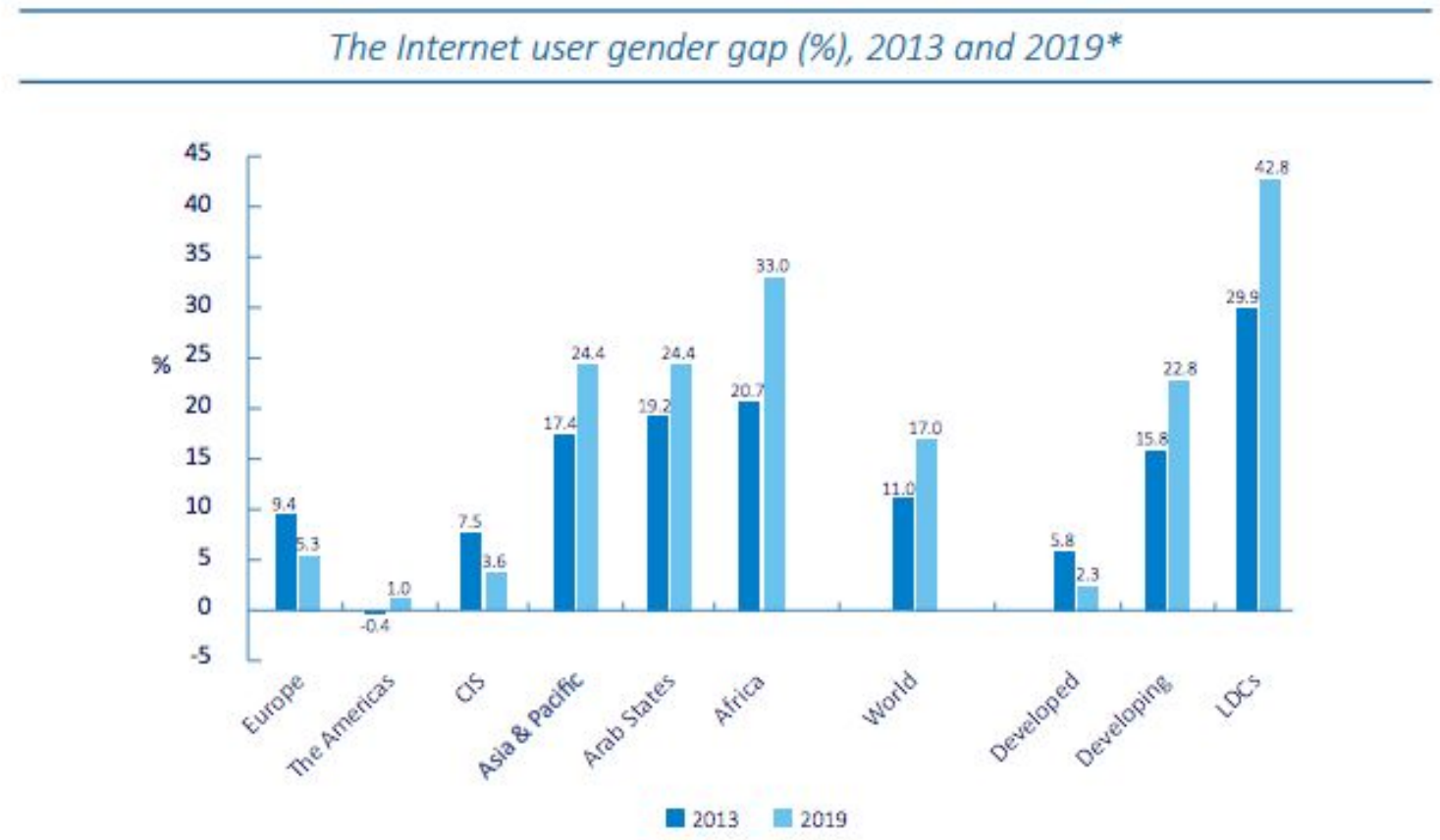
Note: * ITU estimate. Penetration rates in this chart refer to the number of women/men that use the Internet, as a percentage of the respective total female/male population.

Web Foundation analysis has found that men are 21% more likely to be online than women — rising to 52% more likely in the world's least developed countries (LDCs)

Source:

ITU 2020 &
Economist Inclusive Internet Index

Digital Gender Gap Across Regions



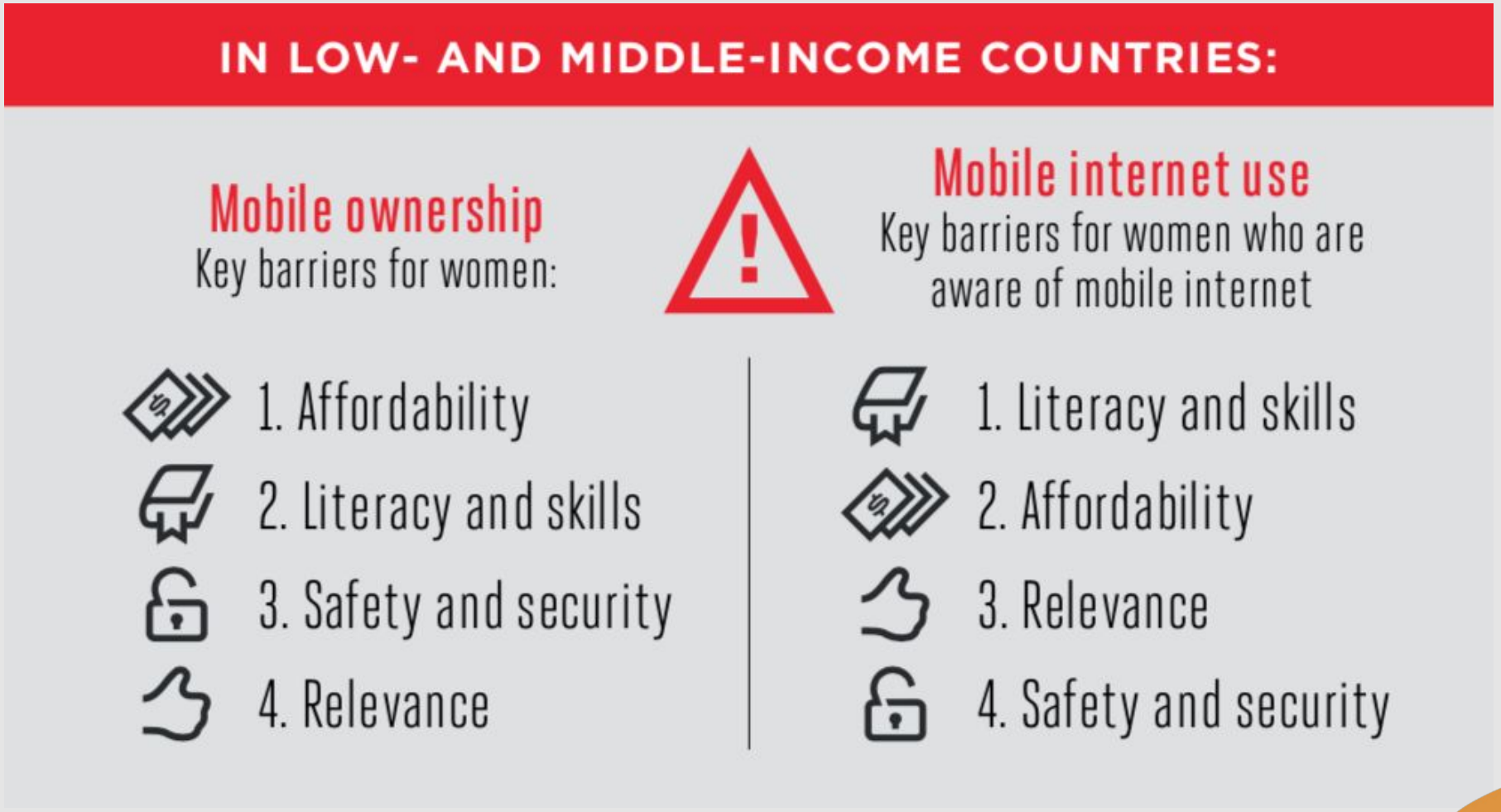
The gap in internet access between men and women is large and continues to grow, across regions and globally

Left unchallenged, this growing divide is a major threat to progress on gender equality

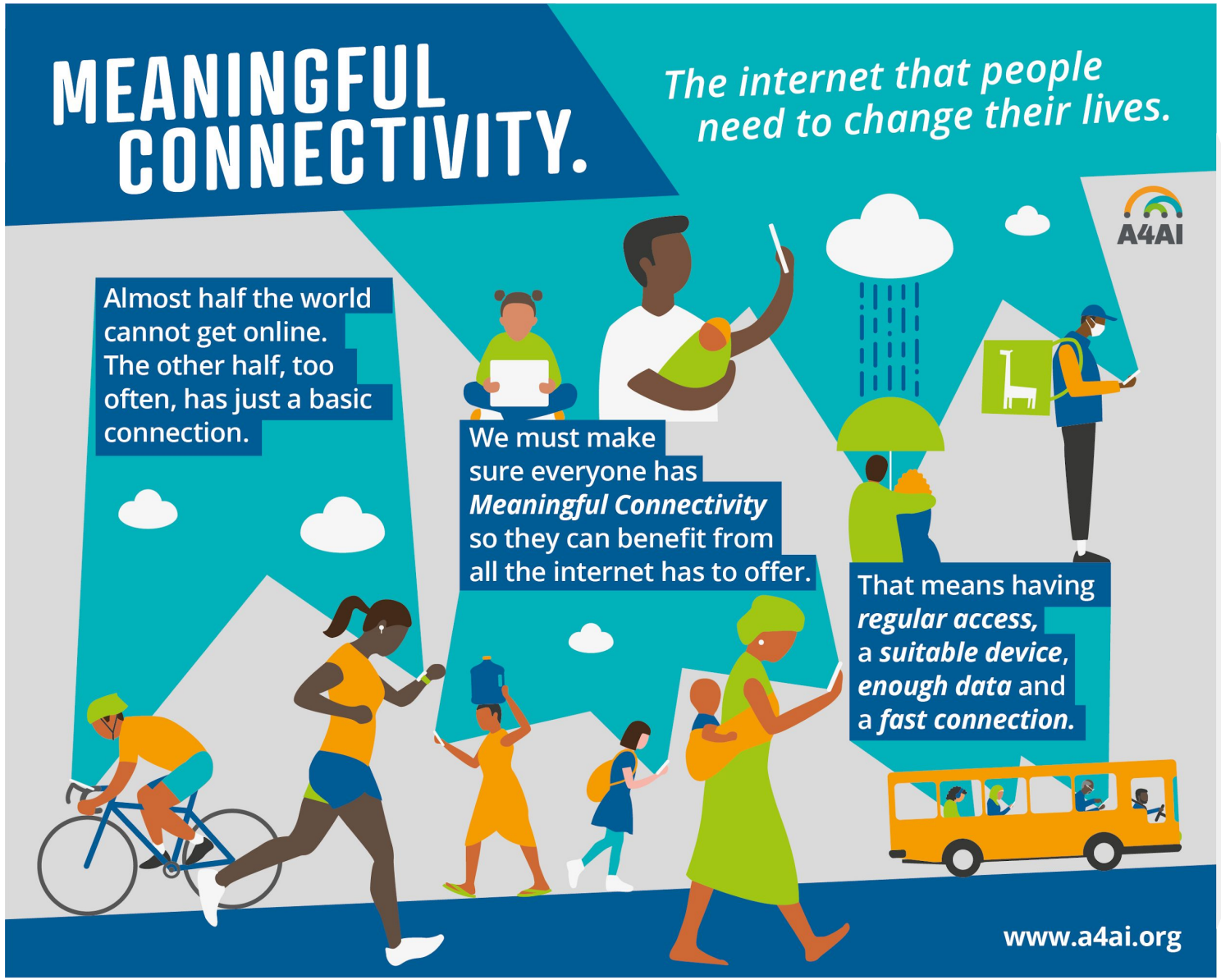
Source:

ITU 2020 &
Economist Inclusive Internet Index

Some facts on the Digital Gender Gap: Barriers



Source: The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2019, GSMA



4G

4G mobile connection

Smartphone ownership

Unlimited broadband access point

Daily internet use

A4AI

Why do we need a new definition?

UNDERWHELMING DEFINITION	*Current UN definition:* internet access from any location/device within the last three months.
INSUFFICIENT BINARY	*Civil society stopgaps:* Increasing number of reports and statements referring to 'meaningful access' as something more. No precise definition.
ILLUSION OF COVERAGE	*Digital divide:* Without a better definition and better measures, risk perpetuating digital inequalities.

Has to be

RELEVANT	**MEASURABLE**	**EVIDENCE -BASED**	**GENDER -RESPONSIVE**	**OPEN INTERNET ACCESS**

Quantitative Measures of Meaningful Connectivity

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIVITY INDICATORS	
MC1	Individuals with a mobile internet connection, by technology
MC2	Individual device access, by ownership
MC3	Proportion of individuals with access to an unlimited broadband connection, by location
MC4	Frequency of internet use

Measuring Dimensions of Meaningful Connectivity

	4G connection	Smartphone access	Fixed (wired or wireless)	Daily internet use	Meaningful Connectivity	Internet Use
🇨🇴 Colombia	40.4	66.5	53.6	42.8	50.8	84.1
🇬🇭 Ghana	5.1	29.0	3.3	7.0	11.1	30.3
🇮🇩 Indonesia	26.6	76.9	24.7	66.8	48.7	77.6

% of people who have...

Source: A4AI, 2020

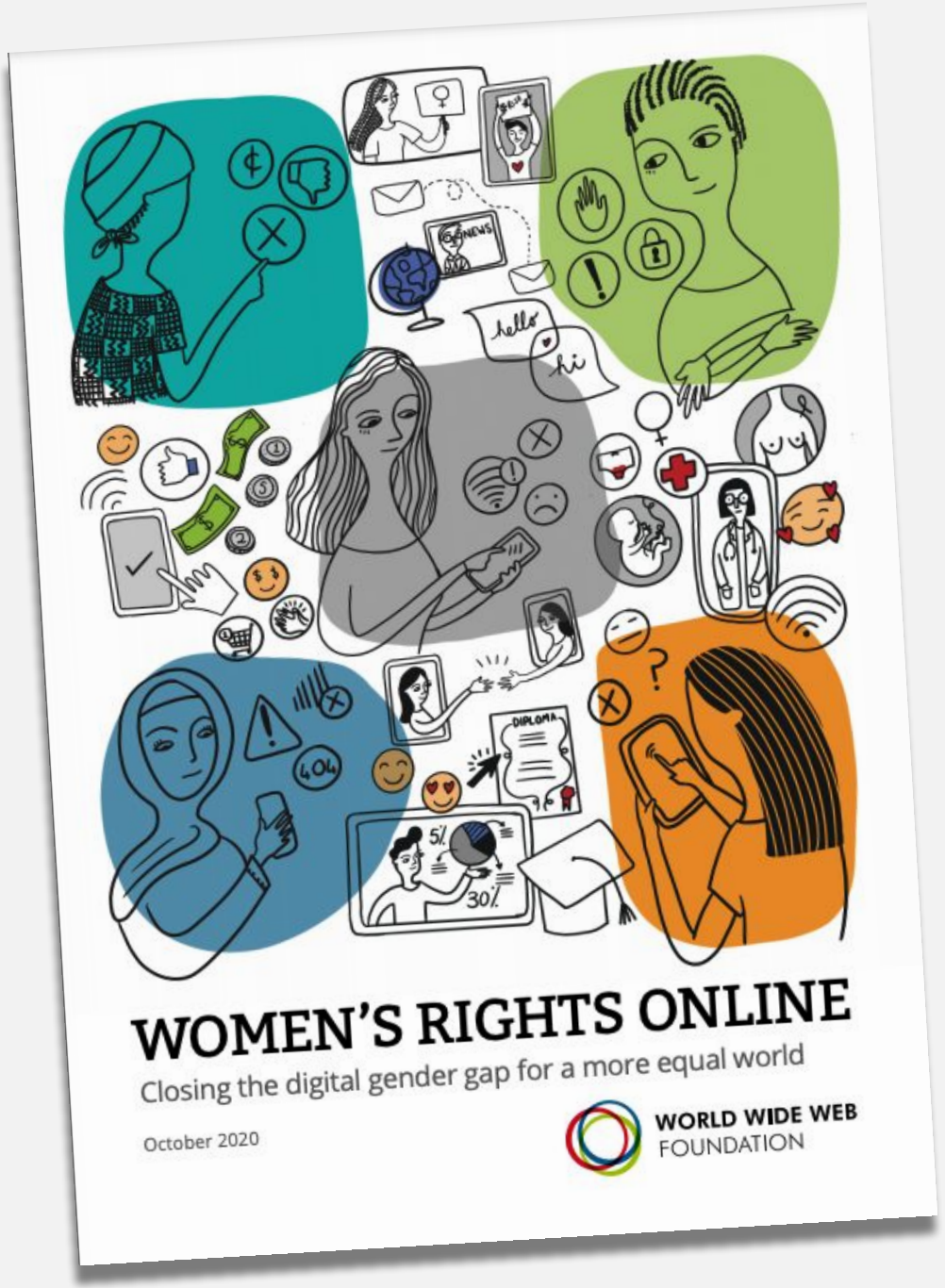


Table 1: Meaningful Connectivity & Internet Use[6]

	COLOMBIA	GHANA	INDONESIA
Internet Access	84.1%	30.3%	77.6%
Gender Gap:	0.9%	5.8%	-0.1%
	83.7% – 84.5%	29.4% – 31.2%	77.6% – 77.5%
Meaningful Connectivity	50.9%	12.5%	50.2%
Gender Gap:	16.9%	14.9%	2.6%
	47.1% – 55.1%	11.7% – 13.4%	49.5% – 50.8%

Source: A4AI 2020 | 2020 Web Foundation nationally representative household survey data in Colombi

Digital gender gaps: From access to Meaningful Connectivity

- The digital gender divide is not only about inequalities in the technology women and men have access to, but how they are able to use that technology and the threats it poses to their safety, rights and opportunities. Digital equality means considering all of these factors as a whole, and building an ecosystem that serves everyone equally without replication of existing social inequalities and oppressions.

- ***Meaningful Connectivity*** means that people can use the internet **every day** using an **appropriate device** with **enough data** and a **fast connection.**

Barriers to Access & Meaningful connectivity

- Time (linked to care burden)
- Affordability
- Digital Education and Skills
- Safety, data protection and privacy
- Relevant content
- Social norms that hinder or impact women’s access to meaningful connect

*Source WRO Report 2020

Mapping gender in ICT laws, and spaces

Some Key Definitions

Law:

↳ Should protect the rights of individual entities (within a country, sector etc). What you are allowed to do in any of the policy/regulatory spheres. Legally-binding.

Policy:

↳ Vision statement/strategy/path developed by an organisation/individual/government (for the public done by Ministry) to tackle a particular issue. Not necessarily legally binding, but the policy should be aligned to legal system.

Regulations:

↳ Instruments to implement the policy (must be aligned to policy - regulation is done by agencies). Needs to be independent/autonomous from policy.

Articulations around gender:

From the initial conceptualising around gender, ICTs or more broadly digital technology, the underlying critique has been that technology is not gender neutral and is determined by existing power dynamics. Gurumurthy asks, “The important questions are: who benefits from ICTs? Who is dictating the course of ICTs? Is it possible to harness ICTs to serve larger goals of equality and justice? Central to these is the issue of gender and women’s equal right to access, use and shape ICTs.”

World Summit on the Information Society :

An important event in the trajectory of human rights discourse being accepted in relation to ICTs was the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that took place in two phases, in 2003 and 2005. There were some recognition of gender, freedom of expression and civil and political rights. Jac sm Kee (ex APC WRP) states that there were 11 mentions of gender in the WSIS outcome documents after hard work from the women's movement and civil society working group.

Human Rights Framework:

Another significant factor is human rights, which are integral for meaningful use of ICTs by women, transgender and gender non-conforming people, especially in developing countries, and this includes civil and political rights but also economic, social and cultural rights. There is a need to assume a general rights-based approach to internet policy development.

An obvious instance of this is the inability to perceive or classify online harassment of women as “real”, and this is partly because women tend to lack an awareness of the human rights they have – including online ones. There is therefore a need for foundational work in raising awareness about human rights in general and women’s rights in particular, and in ensuring that gender work towards promoting and protecting women’s rights also encapsulates ICTs.

A rights-based approach is also important as far as sustainable development in terms of the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are concerned. The significance of access to ICTs for promoting women’s rights and development is widely recognised – most recently in the above resolution, which was adopted in 2015.

Gender vs feminist:

This question comes up particularly in relation to quantitative studies around ICTs and access, but is also relevant to many concerns related to the impact of datafication on vulnerable populations. While a gendered analysis might point out the differences in impact in relation to men and women (or other gender expressions), what a feminist analysis seeks to show is how power and regulation operate around sex and gender.

Feminist research is about a larger politics of change than a project with a gender lens or one that incorporates gender analysis. It is about understanding and examining structures and layers of power and how they work. Feminism is, simply put, about dismantling patriarchy. Research that is from a feminist standpoint emphasises that the location of being a woman– a black woman, indigenous woman, lesbian, gender non-conforming person, etc. – gives a distinctive point of view through which to understand marginalisation and power.

Sources of ICT laws and Regulations

National Broadband plans

- A report by the Broadband Commission's Working Group on Gender (2017) found that a vast majority of National Broadband Plans fail to include gender targets.

National ICT laws

-Currently, only 113 countries submit gender-disaggregated data on Internet access to the UN agency responsible for tracking this indicator,

-The ITU has no gender-disaggregated data at all on other important ICT indicators. As noted by the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, "Aggregate data collection masks gender differences, which implies that women's realities remain unrecorded and are ignored, not only in statistics but also in policy

Digital Economy laws

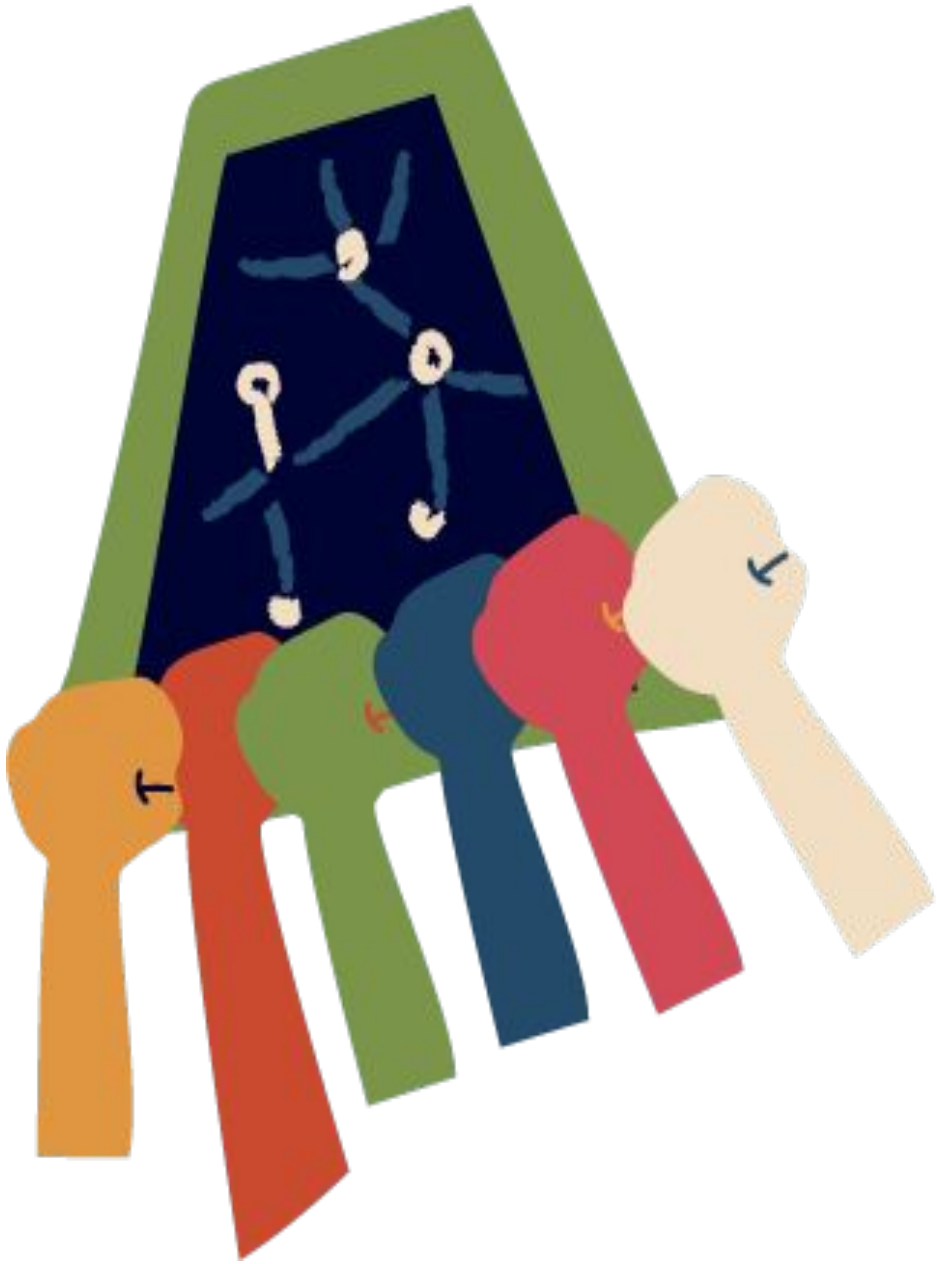
-

Telecoms Regulator Regulations, Decrees

Mainstreaming gender responsiveness in ICT policy and laws

The tools and methodologies

“Mainstreaming gender is both a technical and a political process which requires shifts in organizational cultures and ways of thinking, as well as in the goals, structures and resource allocations.... Mainstreaming requires changes at different levels within institutions, in agenda setting, policy-making, planning, implementation and evaluation.”- *United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution*



Why do (ICT) Policies need to be gender-responsive?

- “Allowing for gender perspectives in policy means **to fully understand how women and men have been socialized differently** and, consequently, understand the disparate impacts of policy on the different genders.”
- **Women are not a homogenous group** - policy should consider the experience of women from different socio-economic groups, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation etc.
- **Women have differential access to the internet** due to factors such as income, education level, social norms which need to be taken into account when developing inclusive policies.

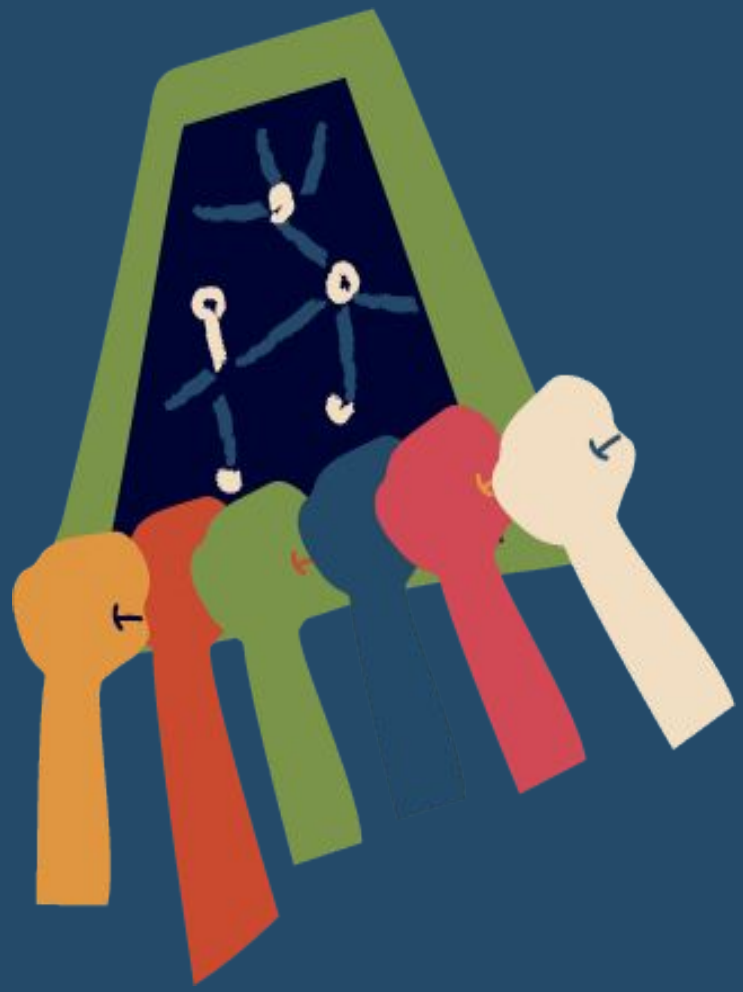
Gender-Responsive (ICT) Policies address the following:

- Ensure **gender considerations in all policy development/reform analysis**
- **Involve gender advocates and experts** in the policy and planning process from the start
- **Establish time-bound targets** to achieve gender equality in access across all areas of policies and plans.

Monitoring Gender Responsive ICT Policy for the Sustainable Development Goals: Targets

A call to Action !

- **Prioritize gender equality issues at the highest levels of policy-making** including in the ICT sector;
- **Link ICT policies to existing gender and development policies** (including related to **education**)
- **Breaking silos through gender-responsive policymaking**



Mapping movements for ICT-related policy change

To build movements for social change online, especially those needed to challenge patriarchy and gender norms; to support women and transgender and gender non- conforming persons to develop proactive responses and actively participate in governance and decision making that affect digital technology (especially ICTs), there is a need for further research to better understand:

- The relationship between technology, infrastructure and movements; how to contextualise research and online activism keeping in mind social and cultural dimensions, intersectionality and local histories.

- Counter movements (e.g. Hindu right-wing movenents in India, actions against lesbian and gay festivals in Indonesia, anti-abortion campaigns in countries like the Philippines, etc.) and their strategies and methods, to better understand the dynamics of power and change.

- Strategies of communication, the constitutive role of platforms and technology, and the materiality of movements and technology.
- What a feminist digital media governance approach looks like – what are the priorities, strategies and focus of such governance?
- How feminists' involvement in a plethora of policy forums can be improved, strengthened and streamlined; how women and other marginalised and/or vulnerable groups can be better supported in participating in multi-stakeholder policy platforms.

- The benefits and challenges associated with feminist autonomist infrastructure to support women’s movement building and/or gender equality in ICTs.
- The parallel growth of surveillance and other mechanisms and their effect on self- determination movements and other populations at risk.
- How digital technology is part of movement building and amplifying voices; histories of movement and the use of digital technology.

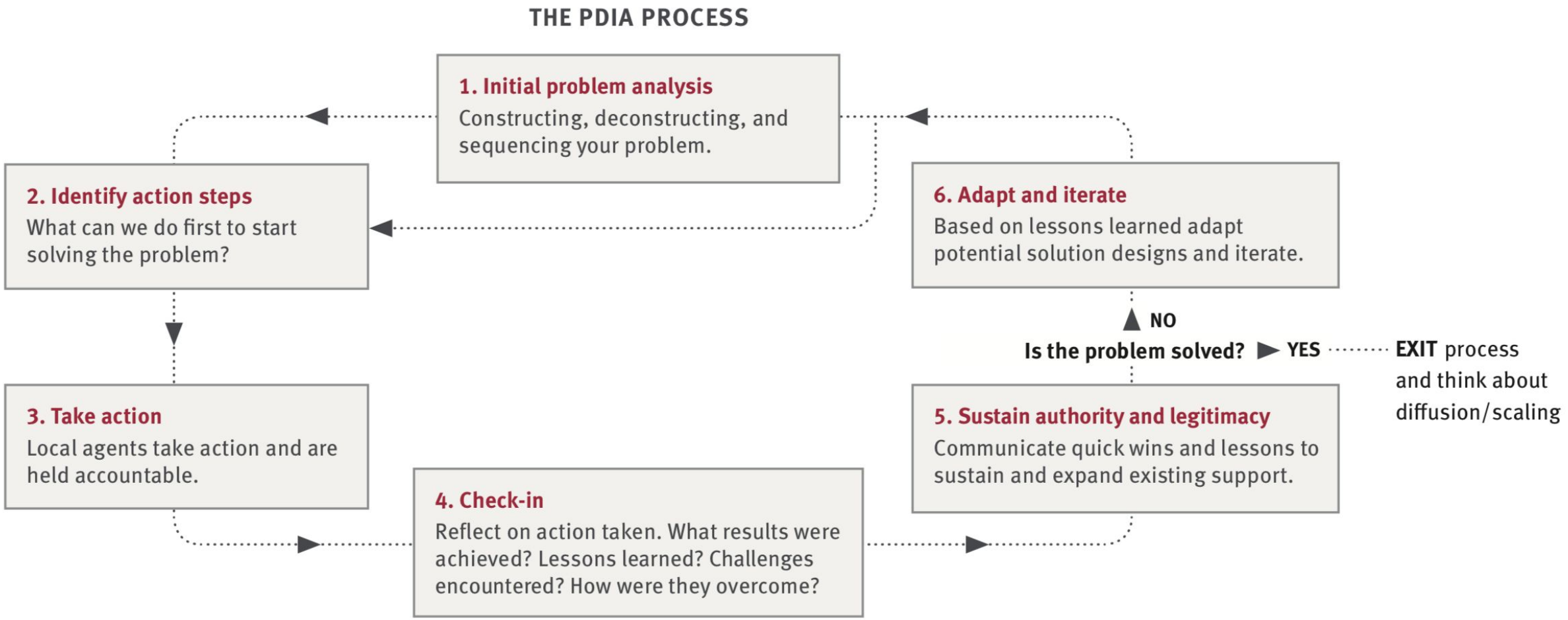
THE BASIC STEPS IN THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS

- ***Full stakeholder engagement required at all levels of the process***
- ***Gender should be involved throughout the process from decision making to implementation eg with women groups, experts & consultants,***

How to define the problem in policy making process to make a persuasive case

Problem Definition	**What matters?**
Requires collection of information, data and knowledge to describe and demonstrate the problem, and why there is a need for a policy solution.	Information and data must be collected and prepared with full understanding of the *context of the problem* (from a social, cultural and economic perspective), should demonstrate why there are gaps in place, and the potential impact of policy. Knowledge around the problem must be shared and reflect all stakeholders views and perspectives of the problem at hand.

Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) Process



1) Digital Gender Gap Audits

WORLD WIDE WEB
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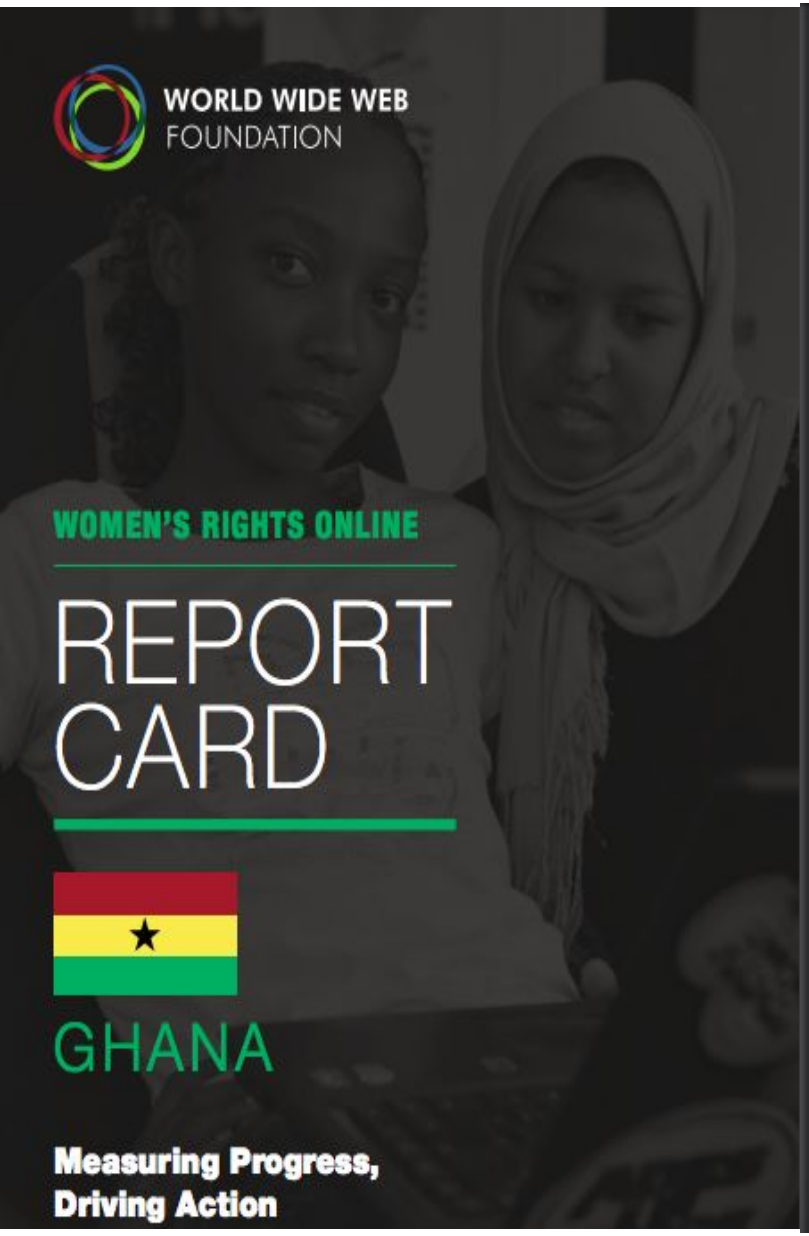
How to Conduct a Digital Gender Gap Audit

- The Scorecard is **based on available secondary data sources** and expert assessment methodology

- Informed by **background desk reviews** and **key informant interviews**

- **Each indicator is scored by an expert reviewer on a scale of 0 - 10.** The scoring criteria was developed so the specific benchmarks for a score of 0, 5 and 10 are comparable across all indicators
- Final Output: **Country Report Card scoring your country's progress out of 100%**
- **More at**
- **https://webfoundation.org/research/digital-gender-gap-audit/ or**
- **http://webfoundation.org/docs/2016/12/WRO-Digital-Gender-Gap-Audit_Toolkit.pdf**



WORLD WIDE WEB FOUNDATION

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ONLINE

REPORT CARD

GHANA

Measuring Progress, Driving Action

WORLD WIDE WEB FOUNDATION

GHANA

OVERALL SCORE:

30%

AFFORDABILITY

SCORE: 4

1GB of data costs over 7% of average monthly income. The government has established some public Community Information Centers, but many are not fully operational, with breakdown of equipment and lack of connectivity cited as concerns. Public libraries increasingly provide ICT access.

INTERNET ACCESS & WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

SCORE: 2

Less than 20% of women in Ghana have access to the Internet. The national ICT policy recognises ICTs as a tool for fighting gender inequality. The 2015 national gender policy also recognises the gender gap in access to technology, digital knowledge and ICT skills. However, there are no clear targets in place to monitor these objectives, and data on female Internet users is not regularly collected.

DIGITAL SKILLS & EDUCATION

SCORE: 1

Ghana has a policy on compulsory ICT education in schools and integration of ICT into teacher training, but implementation has been slow and there are no specific gender targets for women or girls' digital skills and education. No data is available on the number of schools with Internet access.

RELEVANT CONTENT & SERVICES

SCORE: 4

A few civil society organisations maintain websites that provide information and services related to reproductive health, but more needs to be done in this area. 12% of women in Ghana have access to mobile financial services.

ONLINE SAFETY

SCORE: 5

The Ghana Police Service and its Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit received some training on ICT based violence against women, but responses are currently inadequate due to lack of resources. A Data Protection Act was passed in 2012, which includes an independent commission mandated to enforce compliance.

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP: A 5 POINT ACTION PLAN

1. **ESTABLISH SPECIFIC TARGETS TO CLOSE THE ICT GENDER GAP.** The National ICT for Accelerated Development Policy should be reviewed to include targets for improving women and girls' access to the Web and and bridging the ICT gender gap. Data on women's Internet access and use should be collected annually.
2. **MAKE THE INTERNET MORE AFFORDABLE.** The 20% import tax imposed on mobile phones in Ghana must be removed, as promised by the government. Consider adopting pricing models and/or tax incentives to subsidise rural Internet access. Multimedia centres offering public Internet access should be made available throughout Ghana.
3. **IMPROVE DIGITAL SKILLS INTERVENTIONS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS.** Government must incorporate ICT literacy into teacher training and school curricula, and encourage women and girls to enter science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programmes. Adult ICT centres and programmes should also be established to support women's economic empowerment.
4. **MAKE RELEVANT CONTENT AND SERVICES FOR WOMEN AVAILABLE ONLINE.** Develop a systematic approach to including women and girls in the design and programming of ICT hardware and software so that products, services, and content are relevant to women. Train and support women's groups to create content and use the Internet and social media tools to amplify women's voices.
5. **ENSURE A SAFE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT.** Existing policies should be revised to address online violence against women (VAW), and awareness campaigns should be mounted to publicise the legal processes available for seeking redress. The Ghana Police Service and the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) must be trained and equipped with all resources (technical, human, financial) to fight all forms of digitally enabled violence against women.

WORLD WIDE WEB FOUNDATION

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ONLINE

REPORT CARD

NIGERIA

Measuring Progress, Driving Action

WORLD WIDE WEB FOUNDATION

NIGERIA

OVERALL SCORE:

30%

AFFORDABILITY

SCORE: 5

67% of women in Lagos reported being unable to afford a 1GB data plan. The recent abolition of a regulatory minimum on data prices has led to dramatic cost reductions, although a proposed 9% tax on data, if approved, could reverse much of that progress.

INTERNET ACCESS & WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

SCORE: 2

Just 36% of poor women in Lagos use the Internet. Only 10% of women Internet users had ever searched for information on sexual and reproductive health online, while 19% have looked for a job using online portals.

DIGITAL SKILLS & EDUCATION

SCORE: 2

The Government has launched initiatives such as 'Smart-Woman Nigeria' and the 'Digital Girls' Clubs' in secondary schools, but education is not explicitly addressed in the 2012 national ICT policy. There is no data on the number of schools connected to the Internet.

RELEVANT CONTENT & SERVICES

SCORE: 3

Information about women's health, rights and other services that promote women's well-being is lacking online. Most websites are in English, and many women with limited education are unlikely to benefit. Just 2% of women have access to mobile financial services.

ONLINE SAFETY

SCORE: 3

The Cybercrime Act criminalises cyberstalking but not harassment or other violence against women online. Women say that police rarely pursue charges of online harassment. Nigeria lacks a data protection framework. However, the Digital Rights and Freedoms bill now in the legislature would guarantee privacy rights.

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP: A 5 POINT ACTION PLAN

1. **SET GENDER TARGETS FOR THE NATIONAL ICT POLICY.** Update the Nigerian National ICT Policy to prioritise access for women and girls, with measurable and time-bound targets. Based on this, design specific interventions or programmes (with adequate budget) encouraging increased access, training and use of the Internet for the specific groups of women and girls currently most likely to lack Internet access.
2. **IMPROVE INTERNET ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY.** Government should work towards a target of 1GB of mobile data priced at 2% or less of average monthly income, as recommended by the Alliance for Affordable Internet - of which Nigeria is a member.
3. **INTEGRATE DIGITAL SKILLS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULA.** Education policy should make the teaching of basic ICT skills compulsory at the primary school level to spark interest in ICT among young girls.
4. **PROVIDE RELEVANT CONTENT AND SERVICES ONLINE.** Government must prioritise wide online availability of local language information about women's health, rights and services that empower women.
5. **PASS THE NIGERIA DIGITAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOM BILL.** Protect the rights and privacy of both female and male users of digital platforms by passing the Nigeria Digital Rights and Freedom Bill into law, to encourage optimum online participation.

Digital Gender Gap Audit: West Africa in Comparison

	Overall Score	Internet Access & Women's Empowerment	Affordability	Digital Skills & Education	Relevant Content & Services	Online Safety
		(Scored out of 10)				
Cameroon	20%	3	4.5	1	1	0.5
Côte d'Ivoire	38%	3	4	3	5	4
Ghana	30%	2	4	1	4	5
Nigeria	30%	2	5	2	3	3

WORLD WIDE WEB FOUNDATION

New Digital Gender Gap Audit Research

- Research completed in 20 countries to date across Africa, Asia, Latin America
- Currently conducting new research in, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Samoa,. Recent ones in Africa include Togo, Benin and Namibia (2020)
- We welcome collaboration on new gender research
    - Uganda case - WF working with Uganda regulator to conducted an updated gender policy audit, based on the previous research from 2016-2016
    - Research will be used to inform gender-responsive ICT policies
    - Evidence based policymaking to close the digital gender gap

The Web Foundation Gender and ICT Policy Assessment Tool

- This tool may be used to:
  - ***Evaluate the gender responsiveness of ICT policies****, programs and interventions*
  - ***Identify opportunities and priorities for new research****, advocacy and campaigns*

Theme	Primary questions	If YES then assess …	Why (Rationale and supporting evidence that such policies work)
Gender targets in National ICT or Broadband Plans	1. Does the country have a current national ICT strategy or Broadband Plan? 2. Does the country have a national ICT policy or strategy that includes concrete targets for gender equity in ICT access and use? 3. Does the plan or strategy include a specific target on gender equity in training and skills to use the internet? 4. In the absence of a clear policy framework outlining gender targets for ICT access and use, are there any exceptional programmes designed at enhancing women's access to digital opportunities?	Is the target for gender equity in access to the internet time bound, measurable and ambitious? Is the target backed by specific interventions or programmes that have been allocated adequate budget? Have the implementing agencies and partners been identified? Note, there may be a coordinated effort across government agencies and IT and telecom, working with private and NGO partners Is there gender-disaggregated data that has been collected on this target? Is there a plan to collect adequate, timely gender-disaggregated data to monitor this target?	Research shows that many national plans or strategies include a rhetorical commitment to gender equity, but fail to translate this into concrete, measurable targets backed by resources. Only 30% of countries included in the Web Index score higher than a five out of ten for implementing concrete targets for gender equity in ICT access and use. See here for Web Index data, country scores, and regional rankings In more recent research of 58 low and middle income countries in 2017, countries scored just 2.73 out of 10, indicating very little to no discussion of the digital gender gap and possible responses to address the problem at the policy level. The highest score awarded was a five (out of 10) — and only six countries achieved this score (Botswana, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Nigeria, Turkey). Each of these six countries has recognised in some form the need to address the digital gender gap at the policy level, or has developed national level programmes targeted at improving internet access and use for women and girls, but none of them have any measurable targets for improving women's access and use as part of a comprehensive strategy, or national ICT or broadband policy.

Pairing the Digital Gender Gap Audit Toolkit and ICT Policy Assessment Tool

Digital Gender Gap Audit Toolkit (Advocacy Tool)	*Policy Assessment Tool (Policy Reform Tool)*
• **Quantitatively measure and monitor progress** towards closing the ICT gender gap (beyond access) in the absence of relevant data	• **Evaluate the gender responsiveness of policies, identify gender gaps in policy and implementation**, identify policy recommendations, inform areas for policy reform

The Resulting Policy Recommendations

RIGHTS

Protect online rights & privacy in law

Equip police & judiciary with training & resources to fight online violence

EDUCATION

Integrate basic digital literacy in school curricula at all levels

Expand digital literacy training beyond technical skills›

ACCESS

Achieve the A4AI "1 for 2" affordability target

Develop more public access solutions

Create options for subsidised basic data allowance, focused on women

CONTENT

Prioritise local language data, info and services that empower women

Audit government websites to assess their gender relevance

TARGETS

Adopt concrete ICT gender equity targets, backed by adequate budgets

Collect ICT data disaggregated by gender, income & location

Develop new indicators to measure impact of ICT on women

We can close the digital gender gap if we R.E.A.C.T

Rights

Education

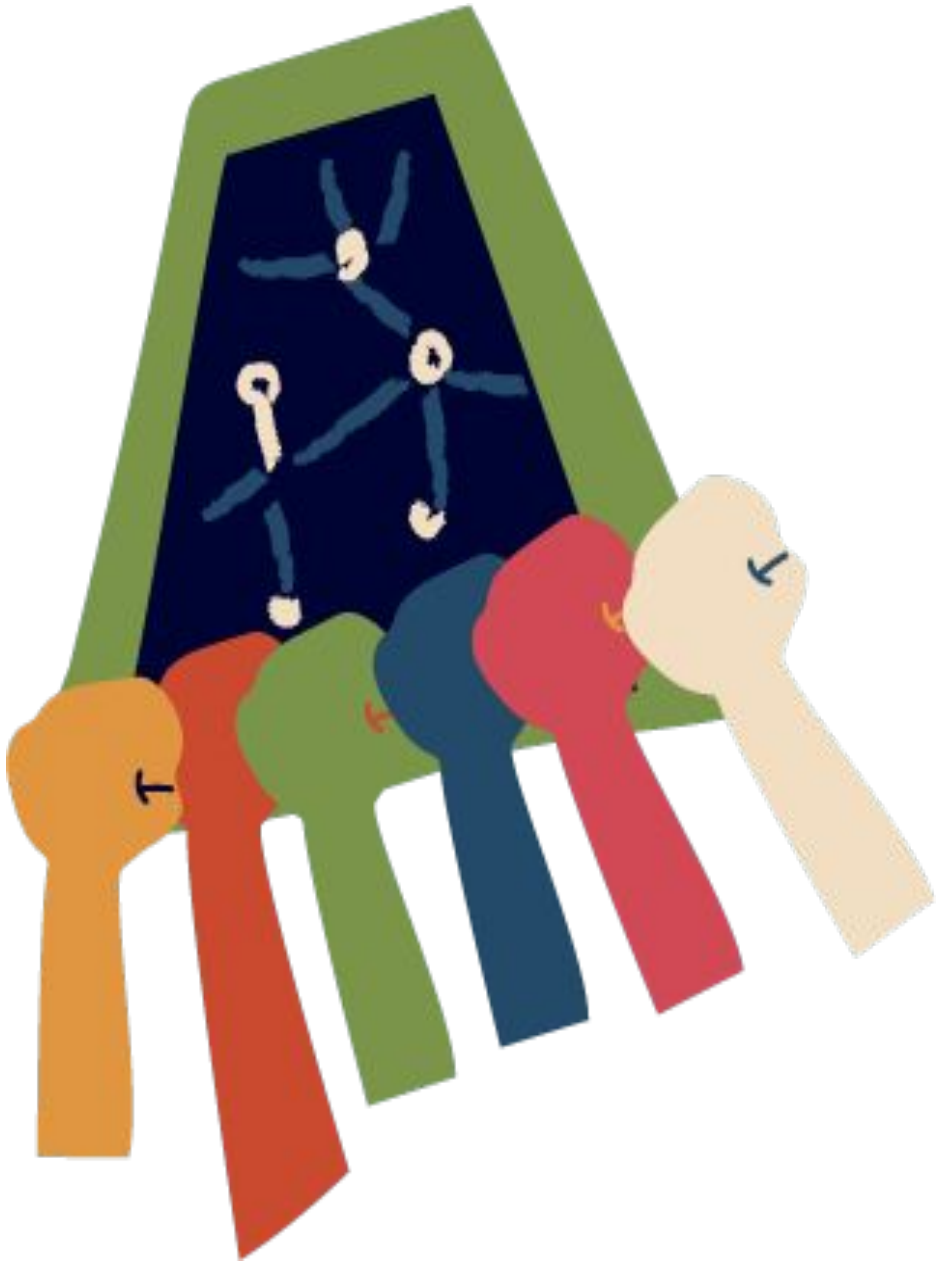
Access

Content

Targets

Based on what you have learnt today how do you think you can use the REACT framework to mainstream gender into ICT Laws and policies ?

Discuss 10mins



Resources: How to make ICT policy gender responsive

The Costs of Exclusion Report (2021), Economic consequences of the Digital Gender Gap
https://webfoundation.org/2021/10/women-are-being-left-offline-and-its-costing-governments-billions/
Resources: How to make ICT policy gender-responsive?
- A toolkit for researching women's internet access and use (2018):
https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/GSMA-Women-and-Internet-Research-Toolkit_WEB.pdf
- Alliance for Affordable Internet: Affordability Report (2020):
https://a4ai.org/affordability-report/report/2020/
- ITU Partnership for Measuring ICT for Development: Measuring ICT and Gender:
https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/webdtlstict2014d1_en.pdf
- Broadband Commission Working Group on Gender (2017):
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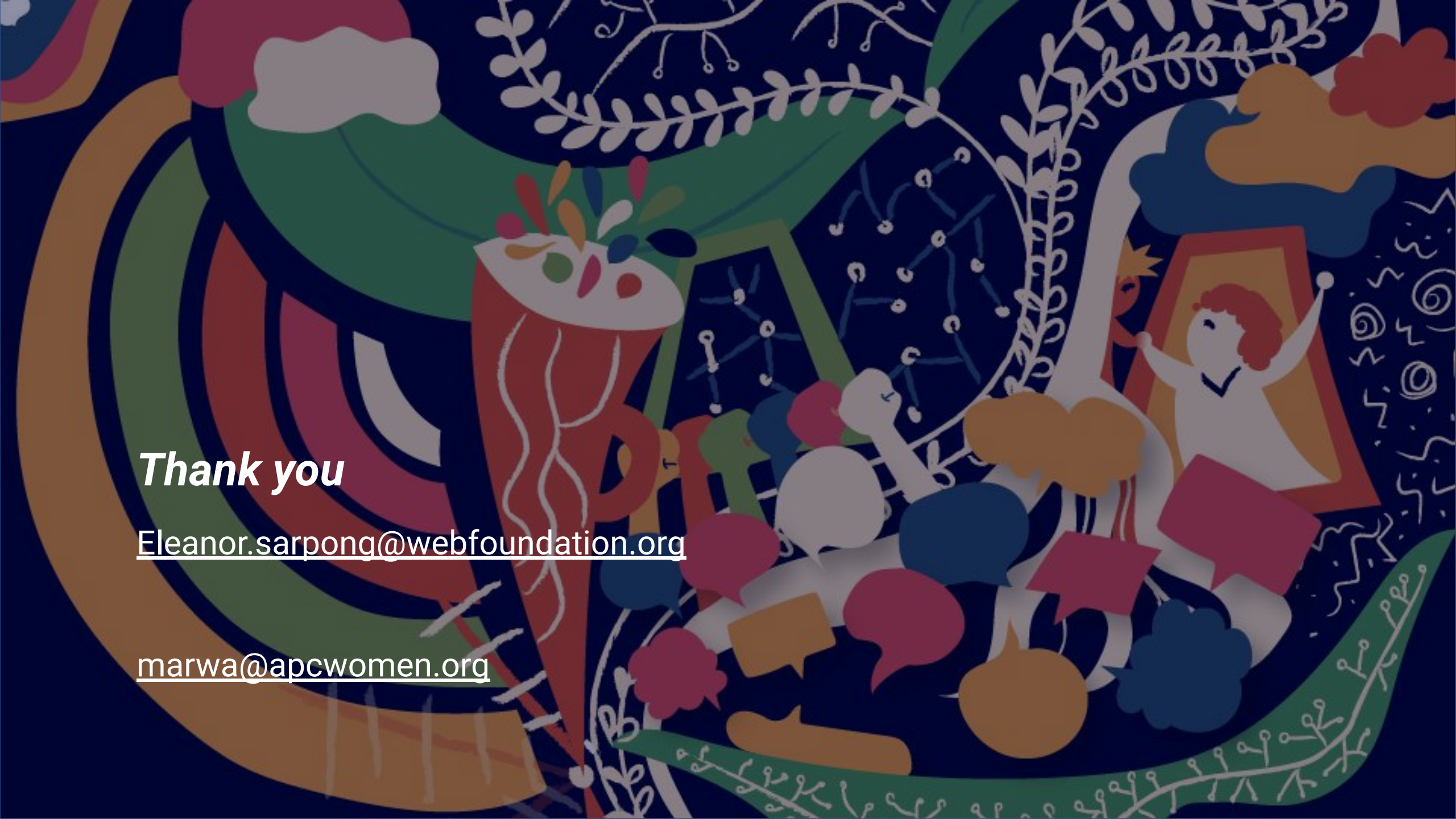

Thank you

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Who is addressing Digital Gender Gap?

UN Broadband Commission

Web Foundation / Alliance for Affordable Internet

GSMA Connected Women

EQUALS Global Partnership

UN Human Rights Commission

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- affordable access by 2020 **(9c)**
- education, relevant ICT skills **(4.4)**
- gender equality and ICT **(5b)**