

## **IGF 2017 Reporting Template**

- Session Title: [Digital inclusion for women: Scaling up our efforts](#)
- Date: [Monday 18th December 2017](#)
- Time: [10.10am – 11.40am \(CET\)](#)
- Session Organizer: [GSMA](#)
- Chair/Moderator: [Helen Croxson, Market Insight Director, GSMA Connected Women](#)
- Rapporteur/Notetaker: [Dominique Lazanski, Public Policy Director](#)
- List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:

Organisation	Panelist	Title	
Web Foundation (of which A4AI is an initiative).	Nanjira Sambuli	Digital Equality Advocacy Manager	
Millicom	Rachel Samren	EVP Chief External Affairs Officer	
APC	Chat Garcia Ramilo	Executive Director	
ITU	Doreen Bogdan-Martin	Chief, Strategic Planning and Membership	
UN Women	Anna Falth	Deputy Executive Director UN Women	

- Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):

- The size of the gender gap in internet usage, particularly mobile internet usage i.e. that more men than women use the internet and therefore many women are missing out on life-enhancing opportunities, such as health information, financial services and employment opportunities
- The multiple, interlinked and complex barriers that can prevent women from accessing the internet as much as men
- The fact that it is not just barriers to internet access that women face but also to usage, when women access the internet their usage is often less sophisticated than men's
- Despite increasing attention to this issue and a growing number of initiatives to address the barriers for women in internet access and use, the gender gap persists
- The challenge of scaling up efforts to tackle the barriers, stimulating female usage of the internet and closing the gender gap

- If there were presentations during the session, please provide a 1-paragraph summary for each presentation: n/a

- Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session (3 paragraphs):

- The discussions centred around three key areas:
  1. The size and drivers of the gender gap in internet usage
    - According to the ITU today there are 3.9 billion people that are currently not connected to the internet, so more than half of the world's population is still not connected. Two out of three of those not connected reside in the Asia Pacific region. Many of them live in rural areas, and vulnerable groups are those that are the most affected, and that means women and girls.
    - The gender gap is driven by a complicated set of barriers that are often market specific but some issues are more significant for example: the internet is too expensive for many (particularly women), many women lack digital literacy skills, there are concerns around lack of relevant content, concerns around safety on line, impact of social norms making it appear less acceptable for women to use the internet (or own phones) in some markets, and the perception that the internet is for social media and frivolous uses.
  2. What is currently being done to help tackle this issue
    - Some current initiatives that exist to help improve female digital inclusion were discussed for example: in Costa Rica the government is providing subsidies to low income households to buy fixed broadband and computers and c.95% of the HHs that qualify are female led, in Columbia the government has a specific program that targets people who have never been online before, and it targets the affordability issue from both the cost of data and the cost of devices, an APC partner has been focussing on local access and have launched the first-ever fully licensed community-owned and operated GSM network and Millicom has been training female sales agents to help them train women and communities and they have also been working with groups of crafts women in rural areas, not only teaching them how to use smartphones, but also teaching them how to set up mobile money wallet, how to create their own Internet pages so they can sell their crafts on line, can save money through the mobile money wallet, and thereby really become contributors to the local economy as well as much more financially independent.
  3. What else should or could be done to help close the gender gap in internet usage
    - *Please see the response to the below question*

- Please describe any Participant suggestions regarding the way forward/ potential next steps /key takeaways (3 paragraphs):

- Throughout the discussions there was acknowledgement that this is a complex issue, with country-specific dynamics and unfortunately there is 'no silver bullet' to solve the problem. However various approaches to tackling the gender gap in internet use were proposed including:
  - Understanding the problem, on a country by country level and tailoring the solution by market
  - Measuring the impact of solutions to truly understand their effectiveness and understand how the successful ones can be scaled up and/or transferred to other countries
  - Improving girls education, improving and empowering girls lives through education, giving them a better start and helping them to become future leaders and more able to adopt technology
  - Engaging male champions (especially in countries with strong social norms where men can be gatekeepers to female access and use) to help promote female digital inclusion, persuading other men of its importance and benefits
  - Raise awareness on what the internet can actually bring, on how it can benefit women

- Overcome some of the strong social norms that are holding some women back from being able to use the internet
- Ensuring that both socially and culturally relevant content is available on the internet that appeals to women
- Improve online safety for women, preventing particularly cyber harassment and cyber security
- Provide models for local access and community networks that can be replicated elsewhere, with a focus on infrastructure and regulation
- The Web Foundation use the 'REACT' framework to help address the issue. REACT is an acronym for: Rights, education, affordable access, relevant content and government targets
- Review the set of recommendations proposed in the recent report from the Broadband Commission Working Group on the Digital Gender Divide
- Stakeholders should share information, collaborate to decide on key projects, work in partnership together (rather than competing) and be more focussed in their efforts
- In order to scale up the efforts to close the gender gap in internet access and use there needs to be commitment at a high level both globally and locally. In particular we need to get governments to understand and commit to solving the issue with gender responsive policies and long term plans

### **Gender Reporting**

- Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session: c.50
- Estimate the overall number of women present at the session: c.35
- To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment? It was the focus of the session
- If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion:  
Please see above