Gender and ICTS: Annotated Bibliography

Contents

1. A broad overview of Gender and ICT issues and statistics

Global Information Society Watch, 2013
Women's Rights, Gender and ICT
Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (HIVOS), 2013
http://giswatch.org/sites/default/files/gisw13_chapters.pdf

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are critical to achieve women's rights. Access to the internet is a precondition to women's full participation in all spheres of life. At the same time, we must not forget that gender stereotypes and inequalities exist online as they exist offline; the internet can misinform and put rights at risk. This document explores the topic by providing thematic reports, an institutional overview and an A to Z list of country reports which draw the connection between legal frameworks, the use of ICTs and women's rights.

Some of the findings are - that strengthening capacity to use and govern the internet for advancing human rights and weakening its potential to exacerbate inequality and abuse will require what women's movements have long brought to other complex phenomena: the power of feminist analysis and reframing concepts so that they can be transformed into policies. Constant feminist input has possibly made it harder for hegemonic groups to pretend that talking about issues without any reference to groups of people and their highly divergent positions and needs is natural and should be sufficient. Internet governance constitutes a new global political field that has been elaborated during a time period of comparatively strong feminist and social justice constituencies at the global level.

Local and global renegotiations of policy priorities at the World Summit of Information Society review (WSIS +10), the 20-year review of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women and the post-2015 development agenda are an opportunity to address the advantages and risks connected to ICTs and gender equality. Encouraging women to integrate themselves in the discussion and to influence the decision-making process will help them in proposing better policies to address the issues at stake and the challenges they are facing.

Women and Gender in ICT Statistics and Indicators for Development
Nancy J. Hafkin and Sophia Huyer, 2007
http://itidjournal.org/itid/article/viewFile/254/124

The lack of statistical data on gender and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) makes it difficult to develop gender-sensitive ICT policies, plans and strategies. It seems to be especially challenging in developing countries where many governments do not collect ICT data – in particular sex disaggregated data – on a regular basis. Without such data, women's ICT use and needs remain invisible. ICTs were recognised as an important tool for women's empowerment during The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in 2003.

A study on West African countries revealed that women have 35 percent fewer opportunities and benefits than men with regard to ICTs. It was also observed that women tend to use the internet and cell phones more for personal reasons and men's usage is more on a professional level. In many West African countries, men also expressed disapproval when their wives wanted to use a cell phone as they perceived it as a threat to traditional relationships. Sociocultural customs and infrastructural barriers often restrict women from accessing and using ICTs. Access and use of ICTs is perceived as an opportunity to women. School girls in East Africa claimed that they can obtain more freedom by using the internet; escaping the cultural restrictions of their countries. It is therefore crucial that multilateral organisations and partnerships encourage national statistical offices to collect sex-disaggregated data in order to address the ICT gender divide.

World Bank. Engendering ICT Toolkit.

http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/EXTICTTOOLKIT/0,,contentMDK:20271914~menuPK:562582~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:542820,00.html

This very practical and useful online toolkit comprises the following sections:

- An **overview of gender and ICTs**, divided into sections on rationale for incorporating gender issues into ICT projects and gender equality issues in ICT. It addresses key questions that include: why gender equality and ICTs?; Why do women need ICT?; How can women's opportunities to benefit from new technologies be ensured; as well as providing insights into a range of issues relating to ICTs, such as social and cultural context, education and skills.

- **ICT projects and policy**, looks at prospective gender equality issues in ICT projects and gender in ICT policy. The section provides a list of ICT issues that are useful for task managers to focus on during project preparation. It notes key ICT concerns and provides a checklist to help the user identify relevant gender equality issues.

- A **checklist** for the planning, design and implementation of an ICT project incorporating gender issues.

- **Country profiles:** eleven country profiles for quick reference and comparisons. Information is provided on education differentials, Internet usage, labour-market participation by women inside and outside of ICTs, wage differentials, government policies on ICTs and on gender, socio-cultural factors, and a brief conclusion on the highlighted country can be accessed by clicking on country maps.

- **Indicators** for monitoring gender and ICT, which identifies specific indicators for monitoring gender and ICTs and focuses on 'sex-disaggregated statistics.' An exceptional case from Korea is provided as an example.

- Other sections also focus on **Gender and ICTs in relation to education; entrepreneurship; labour force Participation; and Social Service Delivery.**

- **Case studies** provide examples of projects that incorporate gender and ICT issues, including a study on 'Women-run Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE) and their Adoption of ICT.

2. Women's access to new technologies

Accessing telecommunications infrastructure in Africa – a gendered perspective
Mariama Deen -Swarray, and Mpho Moyo, 2013
http://www.giswatch.org/en/womens-rights-gender/accessing-telecommunications-infrastructure-africa-gender-perspective

A newly released study by Research ICT Africa (RIA) provides a sex-disaggregated overview of ICT access and use across 11 African countries which highlights the unevenness of access to ICTs. The study unmasks the gender dimensions of the limited sex-disaggregated ICT indicators available. Though in general, access to and use of mobile phones and the internet among women has increased, the RIA study confirms the findings of the few systematic national and multinational studies in this area that women and men are not equally able to access and use ICTs. It goes further to demonstrate that this increases as the technologies and services become more sophisticated and expensive, requiring greater levels of income and education to access and to operate.

To a large extent, gender inequities in access to and use of ICTs cannot be addressed through ICT policies per se, but require policy interventions in other areas that would allow women and girls to enjoy the benefits of ICTs equally. This would include policies and programmes that incentivise the education of girls, which in turn will increase the income that women have to spend on ICT services. Partnerships could be created to provide vocational and ICT skills training for women entrepreneurs to address the educational gap and increase their earning potential.

Towards Evidence-based ICT Policy and Regulation: Gender Assessment of ICT Access and Usage in Africa, *Volume One 2010 Policy Paper 5*
Alison Gillwald, Anne Milek & Christoph Stork
With focus group studies led by Robertine Tankeu, Woldekedian Amde, Norah Mulira, Mbombo Malema, Ike Mowete
http://researchictafrica.net/publications/Towards_Evidence-based_ICT_Policy_and_Regulation_-_Volume_1/RIA%20Policy%20Paper%20Vol%201%20Paper%205%20-%20Gender%20Assessment%20of%20ICT%20Access%20and%20Usage%20in%20Africa%202010.pdf

How can access to ICTs be improved for women in Africa? This study explores the gender inequities of access and usage in 17 countries of East, Central, South and West Africa. It argues that the diffusion of ICTs is highly uneven, concentrating in urban areas and leaving some rural areas almost untouched. Access to these technologies is constrained by levels of literacy and education, which vary greatly depending on gender. The survey does reveal some surprising instances where more women than men own mobile phones, such as in

South Africa and Mozambique, or where women have greater knowledge of the Internet, such as in Cameroon.

More generally however, the study confirms the differences in access by men and women to ICTs especially where they depend on public access. It is also clear from the evidence that although there is gender inequity, poorer men and women may have more in common when it comes to ICT access and usage than women and men across income, and urban and rural divides. Another constraint to usage by poorer people is the high costs of services or equipment. The report also notes that, the lack of computer skills is one of the main factors hindering men and women from using the Internet.

The report concludes that, to a large extent, gender inequities in access to and usage of ICTs cannot be addressed through ICT policies. They require policy interventions in other areas that would allow women and girls to enjoy the benefits of ICTs equally. This would include policies and programmes that incentivise the education of girls – and particularly their participation in mathematics, science and engineering if they are to work in this sector in the same numbers as men. The document highlights the importance of creating a legal environment that ensures equal rights for women and men, which safeguards them from discriminatory practices and which fosters equitable participation in society and the economy more widely by both women and men.

Women & Mobile: A Global Opportunity - A Study on the Mobile Phone Gender Gap in Low-and Middle- Income Countries
GSMA and Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2010
http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GSMA_Women_and_Mobile-A_Global_Opportunity.pdf

What kind of tools do people at the base of the economic pyramid need to find employment and to build businesses that will enable them to eventually escape poverty? This article argues that mobile phones are tools that have the capacity of empowering the poor. Women are generally more affected by poverty and a woman in a low or middle-income country is 21 percent less likely to own a mobile phone than a man. In order to close this gender gap, women need to be enabled to be better connected with family and friends, while helping them obtain paid work or run their own businesses. Greater usage of mobile phones by women would stimulate social and economic growth, while generating incremental subscriber and revenue growth for mobile operators. Mobile phone ownership provides distinct benefits to women, including improved access to educational, health, business and employment opportunities. Women surveyed across low and middle-income countries on three continents believe that a mobile phone helps them lead a more secure, connected and productive life.

The document outlines recommendations to promote women's use of the mobile phone. They include that further research is needed to develop deeper knowledge of the impact of mobile phones on women's lives. Furthermore, the mobile telecommunication industry should specifically target women in marketing strategies advertising the mobile phone as a tool for income-generation. Development communities should be promoting the mobile phone as an effective development tool which creates education, health, employment and

business opportunities. Policy makers need to create incentives for the development of mobile services that benefit women.

3. ICTs and Violence Against Women

How Technology is Being Used to Perpetrate Violence Against Women – *And to Fight it*
Association for Progressive Communications (APC), 2010
http://www.apc.org/en/node/11452

How are new technologies used by abusers of violence against women and how are they used by women fighting back? This briefing reveals new research on this topic. The cases were uncovered in research commissioned by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) in 12 developing countries in 2009. One example of APC's research is that abusive intimate partners monitor mobile phone text messages to find out whether their partners are faithful. This has led to husbands murdering their wives after discovering 'love messages' in Uganda. Online harassment or cyberstalking is the use of technology to follow and harass someone – often to the extent that the person fears for their safety. Technology is also linked to sex trafficking. In Colombia, for instance, traffickers are using the internet to communicate with and recruit victims by setting up fake online marriage agencies.

ICTs have a number of characteristics that make them ideal for perpetuating crime. As abusers operate from a distance, identification of and ability to take action against them becomes much more difficult. Some technologies specialise in documenting and informing exactly where someone is which exposes many women to the danger of being monitored by their intimate partners. Telecommunications companies, internet service providers and software developers need to protect users' privacy, security and safety. And governments need to ensure laws and policies respond to these new forms of violence against women.

How can women fight back? Women's rights activists use the internet, mobile phones and other technologies to strengthen their campaigns and advocacy, expand their networks, prevent violations and support healing of survivors. Some of the recommendations of using ICTs for preventing violence are to educate young girls about the implications phone chats and messages can have in regard to becoming victims of violence or harassment. In order to seek public recognition, the visibility of VAW can be enhanced through technology. For example, in Pakistan a video was published on YouTube of a woman being flogged for being in public with a man who was not her immediate relative. In order to seek redress through ICTs, global networks and bodies need to be mobilised. To publicise human rights violations through the internet is necessary in order to seek help from international institutions and puts pressure on the countries where they occur.

Malaysia: Violence against Women and ICT
Association for Progressive Communications (APC), Jac sm Kee and Sonia Randhaw, 2009
http://www.genderit.org/content/malaysia-violence-against-women-and-information-communication-technologies

Can information and communication technologies (ICT) change the ways women experience and confront violence? This paper argues that ICT issues are still seen largely in terms of technology and access to technology, rather than as issues with cross-cutting effects on gender, socio-cultural relations or even the environment. The social dimensions of ICT are primarily framed within the discourse of economic development. This limits discussion on the issues to selected groups of experts, with a focus on how the technology can best be used to help improve Malaysia's economic growth. Women's groups in Malaysia have adeptly strategised and lobbied on issues related to the media to address violence against women (VAW), but this has been largely limited in terms of visibility and representation. Such advocacy has not been extended to the area of information and communication technologies.

The paper explores the content of laws and policies on VAW and ICTs and recommends that it is necessary to politicise the idea of the family and broaden the category beyond the normative heterosexual nuclear family. There is need to reprioritise VAW on the national agenda, not as a women's issue, but as a matter of national concern where the government, private sector, communities and individuals have a duty and obligation to eliminate VAW. Given the prioritisation of economic development in terms of both women's rights and ICT policy, it would be both strategic and valuable to articulate a gendered economic analysis of VAW, and an analysis on the dimensions of VAW to economic development. Deeper knowledge needs to be built around how today's context of communication, spaces and technology affect how women experience forms of violence. This is to enable better understanding on the realities of VAW that women are facing in our diversity, to build capacity in responding both in terms of providing direct services to survivors, as well as in policy and legislative advocacy.

4. ICTs and Women's Economic Empowerment

Labouring Women, Enterprising States – A Research Study on Women, Information Technology and Narratives of Entrepreneurship
Anita Gurumurthy, Lisa McLaughlin and Madhavi Jha
2014
http://www.itforchange.net/sites/default/files/ITfC/Labouring%20Women-Enterprising%20States.pdf

This document explores the structural-institutional facets of the relationship between women entrepreneurs, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the mainstream discourse on entrepreneurship. The research focuses on women entrepreneurs in the two Indian states of Karnataka and Kerala – representing two contrasting ICT ecosystems – the former dominated by big private players and the latter dominated by a welfarist state. One of the key findings of the research is that, for ICT enterprises to fulfill

the feminist agenda of empowerment and agency, the notion of enterprises has to be re-conceptualised. So far as the concept of 'ICTs for women's enterprises' remains bound to instrumental approaches, the socio-political agency of women as workers and citizens entitled to economic justice will not be realised.

The research also points to the need for women's civil society organisations to play a key intermediary role in enabling women to effectively harness the economic empowerment possibilities opened up the emergent techno-social paradigm, going beyond the 'ICTs-as-tools' approach. Currently, women entrepreneurs – in neither state – are political in their public presence. They confront the market as entrepreneurs but lack the power, collective and individual, to negotiate with dominant forces. They occupy specific positions in the global and local hierarchies owing to their flexible labour, but do not enjoy the privileges of the much touted flexibility of being IT entrepreneurs.

Morgan, S. (2012). Women's ICT Sector Employment in Developing Countries: Dualism of Rhetoric vs. Reality in the Case of Sri Lanka. Development Informatics Working Paper 49, Institute for Development Policy and Management, SED.
http://www.seed.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/IDPM/working_papers/di/di_wp49.pdf

How gender-inclusive is the ICT sector? This paper reports on the institutional tensions faced by women in Sri Lanka pursuing jobs in ICT. It notes that women are finding relatively few opportunities in this rapidly growing industry and are encountering gendered stereotypes and a male-centric work environment when they do find work as ICTs professionals. The study points out that the persistent gender division of labour in ICT-related employment on a global scale means that women are missing out on educational and employment opportunities, along with the potentially high salaries and other benefits the professions offer. Furthermore it argues that in a sector that depends on a skilled ICT workforce and where shortages exist, the pool from which to recruit is reduced and developing countries are particularly disadvantaged by this skills shortage. Third it points out that ICT product design risks reflecting only male cultural models. With a focus on the developing country context of Sri Lanka the paper addresses a tension within ICT companies between a rhetoric based on equality, diversity, professionalism and opportunity on one hand, and the reality constrained by a traditional patriarchal social context on the other.

The research indicates that the ICT sector often provides a 'chilly environment for women to work in', with an expectation that employees will work long, unsociable hours that may conflict with domestic responsibilities female employees may also have. It highlights a lack of formal policies to recruit women or develop their careers in ICTs. It concludes that, despite the perception of many ICT organisations that they are gender neutral spaces, and in reality their working practices often reproduce gendered norms and assumptions. The paper ends with the reflection that not addressing this gender blindness represents a significant missed opportunity: "As sites of intersection between global and local institutional forces, these ICT organisations are key for transformative change. They carry the most promise for being instrumental in effecting change for women ICT professionals in Sri Lanka".

May-2007, Economic Empowerment of W omen through Information Technology: A Case Study from an Indian State, P. N. Prasad, V. Sreedevi
Journal of International Women's Studies, Volume 8 | Issue 4 Article 8
http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol8/iss4/8/

It is universally accepted that Information Communication Technologies (ICT) offer immense opportunities for the comprehensive social and economic development of the people all over the world, but there is a growing digital divide between the North and the developing South and between women and men in terms of access to ICTs. This paper argues that without the adoption of digital technologies in developing countries, their chances of development are significantly reduced, and that women are most likely to be affected by these missed opportunities. The paper discusses the success story of a government project for poverty eradication using ICTs. The case study on 'ICT micro-enterprises by self-help group of poor women' describes the story of the successful Kudumbashree Project in Kerala, India that has recognised the power of ICT for poverty eradication through economic empowerment of poor women, and which has grown exponentially since its inception.

The Kudumbashree is being implemented through the local bodies and prioritises women and children from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and targets their overall development. The project is being implemented through neighbourhood groups, which comprise 15 to 40 members; each member belonging to a risk family. The project emphasises basic needs of health, nutrition, education, employment and improvement of economic status, and promotes micro-enterprise as one means to meet these needs. As part of the project many poor women in the neighbourhood groups were trained in computer applications, receiving training in data entry, data processing, desktop publishing (DTP), and IT education. They were organised into groups and provided with entrepreneurship training as the basis for establishing micro-enterprises for applying these skills in the local community, for government and for private organisations. In a period of seven years, more than hundred of these ICT micro-enterprises have now been established throughout the state, providing regular employment to 1500 women. The enterprises compete with big private and government companies and have even been successful in securing state-level contracts for data entry and data processing.

The paper notes that more investment and financial assistance, including through microcredit schemes, are needed for these enterprises to continue growing and empowering women. It also notes that efforts should be made to increase the number of women studying IT related subjects in formal schooling and seeking IT training outside

A bright future in ICTs: opportunities for a new generation of women – February 2012, Tandon, Nidhi
http://girlsinict.org/sites/default/files/pages/itu_bright_future_for_women_in_ict-english.pdf

What opportunities does the ICT sector offer for women and how can current gender inequalities in the sector be addressed? This summary report surveys the global trends in

women's professional development and employment in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector, and offers a sample of the range of national policies, training programmes and initiatives targeting girls and women as potential students and professionals.

The report notes that the ICT sector remains a buoyant and growing sector for employment, and a key economic factor underpinning both national and international development. However, this growth in employment has not yet led to a parallel increase in jobs for women in the ICT labour market, with the female to male ratio particularly pronounced at senior levels. Where women are represented in the ICT industry it is usually at the lowest levels. Research for the report found that women accounted for 30 percent of operations technicians, only 15 percent of managers and a mere 11 percent of strategy and planning professionals.

The report notes that the ICT sector needs to invest more resources in human capital development and to create an enabling environment for women and girls. It argues that there are compelling economic reasons for engaging women more prominently, stating that improving the female to male employment ratio is good for economic growth. The report calls for a combination of approaches to address the current trends, including more emphasis on training girls in ICTs at school, providing incentives for recruitment of women, and offering career promotion training and mentorship. It notes that parents, teachers, career guidance counsellors and recruiters need to be made aware of, and acknowledge, that ICT careers are an important and viable opportunity for girls, and governments need to place a premium on promoting ICT skills in primary, secondary and higher education. The report also presents some examples of initiatives that are already underway to support women and girls in the ICT sector.

Maier, S. and U. Nair-Reichert (2007). Empowerment of Women through ICT-based Business Initiatives – An overview of best practices in e-commerce/e-retailing projects,
http://itidjournal.org/index.php/itid/article/view/255/125

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are consistently hailed as one of the most effective tools for economic development, and the spread of IT-enabled services has been beneficial to both women and men, especially those who have limited skills. This literature review suggests that access to, and effective use of, ICTs contributes to women's empowerment and capacity building in numerous ways. These include learning to use email and word-processing whilst marketable skills create alternative possibilities for income generation. ICTs open new avenues for education, communication and information sharing, and they are valuable tools for the organisation and mobilisation of women's advocacy groups.

Despite these great possibilities and success stories, there are very real challenges being faced by women in ICT businesses. These challenges are often exacerbated by extreme poverty and patriarchal social structures. For example, two key business problems faced by women running micro-enterprises are the constraints in i) obtaining necessary loans for

seed money as well as securing consistent funding for an existing project, and ii) resistance to women's empowerment by government official and fellow villagers. Women can often be discouraged both at the family and village levels in their entrepreneurial efforts due a fear that it may change the power structures. These can be reinforced by both men and older women who want to retain their seniority in the hierarchy.

The paper finishes by looking at some lessons learnt from best practice in e-commerce and e-retailing projects. It suggests that firm reputation and quality of the products are important determinant of success. This is especially important in the case of women owned enterprises in societies that are biased against women. Involvement of community elders and officials in projects was very important to their success and a participatory and open management style is an important factor in the success of women owned e-commerce projects. Peer group support and advice, from both women and men are valuable in overcoming challenges and achieving success.

5. Gender and ICT policy: identifying pathways for change

United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (2005). Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women through ICT. September, New York, http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/w2000-09.05-ict-e.pdf

While there is recognition of the potential of ICTs as a tool for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, a 'gender divide' has also been identified, reflected in the lower numbers of women accessing and using ICT compared with men. This report focuses on the twofold need to address the gender divide and reduce inequalities related to ICT, and to identify ways to use ICT proactively and effectively to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. The report provides a summary of critical gender equality issues related to ICT and development and outlines potential opportunities for women's economic, social and political empowerment. Key strategies and tools to address the gender digital divide in national and international contexts are presented. Examples of good practice on gender equality and ICT are also elaborated throughout the report by the United Nations on promoting gender equality in and access to ICTs. Strategies include:

- the 'Canon on Gender Partnerships and ICT Development', developed primarily by women participants at the first international conference on ICT, the Global Knowledge Partnership Conference in 1997, which outlined key principles for the development and design of ICT, prioritizing equal participation and gender-aware assessments and evaluations of ICT projects and programmes.

- The second Global Knowledge Partnership Conference, where a set of gender-aware recommendations were developed through a Women's Forum and included: collection of gender-disaggregated data on the use of ICTs and indicators to track progress, mainstreaming a gender perspective in all ICT initiatives and enhancing democracy and women's participation through electronic connectivity; and

- The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process, which has given increasing attention to gender perspectives in the development and use of ICTs. For example, the

United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) established a Task Force on Gender and Information and Communication Technologies to coordinate the activities of all United Nations entities working on gender equality and ICT in preparation for WSIS.

Recommendations of the report include:

- Ensuring adequate funding for ICT initiatives for women, and replication and up-scaling of positive innovations and pilot projects
- Gender-sensitive budget processes should ensure specific resources are allocated to increase women's participation in the information economy and ensure that women gain access to new employment opportunities in the ICT sector.
- National machineries for the advancement of women should increase the use of ICT in their work for the advancement of women and gender equality
- In the follow-up to the WSIS process, a key priority should be ensuring that gender perspectives are incorporated into the development and implementation of e-strategies at the national level.

Doubling digital opportunities: enhancing the inclusion of women and girls in the information society, A report by the Broadband Commission Working Group on Broadband and gender, UNESCO, 2013
http://www.broadbandcommission.org/documents/working-groups/bb-doubling-digital-2013.pdf

What roles can ICTs and the Internet can play in advancing gender equality agendas, and how can equal access to new technologies by women and girls be achieved? This report examines the central question of how access to the Internet and ICTs can help redress some of the inequalities women and girls face in their everyday lives, and asks whether inequalities in access to the Internet, and the types of content available online, are in fact reinforcing social attitudes towards women. The report explores measures of inequality in access to ICTs, the importance of ICTs in educating and shaping the aspirations and hopes of the next generation of women and girls, and the implications of lack of access to ICTs by girls and women. Chapter two explores why gender matters in access to ICTs, and why limitations in female access to jobs or education conferring ICT skills can have a large socio-economic impact in today's information society. Chapter three takes stock of what we know about ICT and Internet gender gaps based on latest available evidence, noting that there is a substantial ICT and Internet gender gap in developing countries, which is even larger in some regions and countries.

Chapter four looks at some of the more recent, emerging issues concerning gender and ICT and broadband policy-making. For example, it notes that less than one third of countries' National Broadband Plans (NBPs) refer to gender, and gender considerations are largely absent from the body of policy-making. The report recommends that gender be integrated into national ICT policies as a priority. Chapter five and Annex 2 of the Report highlight some of the valuable work being undertaken by members of the Broadband Commission's Working Group on Broadband and Gender, focusing on gender and access to broadband and

ICTs to improve female access to ICTs and create and generate valuable content online for women to improve demand.

Chapter six presents some conclusions and policy recommendations, which include:

- Integrate gender and national ICT and broadband policies

- Improve sex-disaggregated ICT statistics and measurement

- Take steps to boost the affordability and usability of ICT products and services

- Improve relevant and local content online

- Initiate an Action Plan to achieve gender equality in access to broadband by 2020

Role of ICTs and egovt to promote gender equality in the Asia Pacific - Input for the research by United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG) on
"Role of e-Government to Promote Gender Equality in the Asia Pacific"
IT for change, 2012
http://itforchange.net/sites/default/files/ITfC/unpog.pdf

How can the perceived gender neutrality of egovernance be overcome? Due to the technocratic vocabulary and direct private sector involvement, egovernance is generally not perceived as an area of governance reform or public administration. Gender equality advocates are still unsure about how ICT-mediated transformation can dovetail with the ambitious steps in law and policy for governance reform in general. The egov opportunity for gender equality is in the potential for policy to effect foundational changes to existing power structures. To go in this direction however requires a strong understanding of how new social equations are born out of the ICT based re-engineering process.

ICTs need to be embedded in ongoing policy efforts to promote women's access to entitlements; community monitoring and social audit; financial inclusion and access to banking; right to livelihood; participation in local planning; right to information and local community action for transparency and accountability. Having an overarching policy on egov that is led by the IT department is imperative. While mainstream efforts and innovations will continue and can provide new generation alternatives for integration and convergence, the National Mission for the Empowerment of Women, must become the champion for women's empowerment and gender equality through egovernance, providing the technical guidance for how best to serve the cause of gender and social justice when IT meets governance.

Through the 'information society' prism: Scoping gender equality for the post-2015 agenda
Anita Gurumurthy, Nandini C. and Emma Saloranta
IT for Change, 2012
http://www.itforchange.net/sites/default/files/ITfC/Through%20the%20information%20society%20prism%20-%20Scoping%20gender%20equality%20for%20the%20post-2015%20agenda.pdf

What does the information society offer for women's empowerment and gender equality? This paper argues that information and communication technologies (ICTs) offer the potential for marginalised women to access public spaces. Opening up avenues for self-expression, expanding social networks and opening up opportunities for economic and public-political participation, ICTs hold the potential for emancipation and empowerment. The Post- 2015 agenda therefore, both in terms of goals and related targets and indicators, has to promote and measure women's participation in the information society and their access to and effective use of the Internet and ICTs. There should be a specific goal related to the meaningful and effective use of ICTs and the Internet, which is measured through gender sensitive targets and indicators.

The paper highlights the areas that global and national policy and programmatic frameworks need to address, in order to promote gender equality in the information society context. Nation states must frame legislations and develop policy frameworks that ensure public internet access for all. This entails equal access for men and women and access to culturally and linguistically diverse content. To promote women's access to and effective use of the Internet and ICTs, public interventions with women and girls must move beyond a narrow development perspective that focuses on providing digital literacy and skill-training to women, and instead recognise the opportunity structures that ICTs offer, for enabling women to become self-determining, capable and independent agents of change. Policies and law need to keep pace with the threat to violence against women in digital spaces and ICT systems need to be integrated with local development action plans not only for greater efficiency but also to promote women's public-political participation.

6. Empowering women through ICTs: case study examples

Self Employed Women's Association, Gujarat - A case study
Joshi, A., 2012, IT for change
http://itforchange.net/sites/default/files/ITfC/SEWA_fieldnotes.pdf

How can Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) change how an organisation functions? This document describes the Self Employed Women's Association's (SEWA) ICT and Community Learning Centre (CLC) initiative. SEWA is a women workers' association in India with the mandate of working with poor, self-employed women workers who are part of the informal unprotected labour sector of the country. SEWA initially installed computers in houses of its members in the villages and trained them how to use them. Eventually CLCs were established and equipped with basic IT tools and staffed by the women members who had received the initial training. Women members shared in focus group discussions, that the CLC space was used by them for several activities such as training, planning, workshops, meetings etc.

ICTs have vastly changed how SEWA functions. Through continuous training, staff members and many others are now proficient in using the Internet for sending e-mails. Reporting for various activities to various rungs of the organisation hence is often through mail. Several members, through SEWA Bank loans, have now even bought computers. One of the experiments with mobile phones undertaken by SEWA is the future pricing network. This is

currently being undertaken for different crops in 16 villages. Prices are obtained from a central office and then sent by mail to all the CLCs. From there it is blasted to the mobile phone database. This has greatly contributed in better decision making by the farmer, especially on their choice of crop, rates to sell and markets to sell in. Women members shared that before these prices were available, farmers did not know the market rates of their produce and often got cheated. They affirmed that they could now take more informed decisions.

Empowering women through ICT, 2012, Caroline Wamala, Spider ICT4D Series Number 4, Stockholm University
http://spidercenter.org/sites/default/files/Empowering%20woment%20through%20ICT.pdf

From 2007 up until early 2011 Spider (the Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions) supported various gender-focused initiatives that sought to uplift women particularly in the rural regions of the global south. This report offers an analysis of the impact on the lives of the women that participated in the projects. Various Information Communication Technology (ICT) platforms were used to address a particular need or enhance a specific activity in the women's lives. Five different projects were carried out in six different locations. There were two projects in Bolivia, one focusing on empowering female indigenous leaders and the other provided female victims of domestic violence with a safe virtual environment where they could receive support and exchange experiences and information. Another project was carried out in two separate countries on the coast of the Indian Ocean. The project focused on ecological sustainability, diversification of livelihood, basic training in ICT and focused primarily on women's self-help groups in Kenya and India. In Rwanda the project focus was on integrating ICT into women's basket weaving practices in order to explore the opportunities of an online presence as well as the preservation of traditional practices. A research project in Vietnam focused on the consideration given to gender in the development of ICT.

Key findings from each project were:

Empowering female indigenous leaders through ICT, Bolivia
Due to the project an increasing number of female leaders have been able to gain key political positions at local, regional and national levels. Media such as Skype gave female indigenous leaders an 'easier and cheaper' way to connect to each other; which in turn advanced their confidence and unity in speaking about issues most pertinent to them.

Online consulting service on domestic violence, Bolivia
The Casa de la Mujer domestic violence support program has helped many victims of domestic violence to speak out about their situations by creating an online clinic. ICT formed a bridge between women who were suffering in silence and the help and advice they needed to stand up for themselves.

Putting knowledge to better use, Vietnam
The Spider supported project 'Putting knowledge to better use – industry responsiveness to gender differences in ICT demand in Vietnam' sought to inquire whether gender was a consideration in the design and production of ICT products and services. The research

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found that technology developers do take user perspectives into consideration, but give limited or no attention to gender-specific interests.

Women's digital baskets, Rwanda
This project was implemented through 'contextual learning' which entails focusing on current activities in the community and digitalising the practices to document traditional skills and share them with a wider audience, and to create new e-business opportunities. Eight women were given laptops and digital cameras in order to capture the process of basket weaving. The women were taught how to use the camera to capture their basket weaving skills as well as the finished products. They were also instructed in how to upload the pictures onto computers and create a descriptive log for each basket.

Empowering self-help groups in Kenya and India through ICT
Focusing specifically on the coastal villages in the south eastern regions of Kenya and India, the project set out to promote alternative livelihood activities and build the communities capacity to improve their socio- economic situations. The project succeeded in transferring basic literacy and information technology skills as well as livelihood skills.

Digital Storytelling
Tessa Lewin, 2011
http://www.sdc-learningandnetworking-
    blog.admin.ch/uploads/2011/11/T.Lewin_Digital_Storytelling.pdf

How can the public be engaged to tell their stories in their own words and have an impact on the people who shape policy? This article looks at a particular participatory methodology – Digital Storytelling (DST) – and how it can be used in a development setting to draw out stories and engage both storytellers and their future audiences. Through this example, the article examines the extent to which it is possible to practice communication that is both truly participatory and produces 'useable' results– communication as engagement rather than communication as marketing.

Digital Storytelling is widely used by activists, researchers and artists and is a process of conducting intense workshops during which participants develop a personal narrative and record and illustrate this narrative with still images. The final product is a short film produced and edited by the narrator. DST is both about enabling people to tell stories and enabling others to listen to those stories. The combination of visual images and first person audio narrative is compelling. It is hard not to listen to these stories, and they are generally far more accessible than the academic or legal documents that often articulate policy debates. Digital Storytelling has often been used with groups that have experienced stigma or violence. They experience the process of telling and constructing their narratives as therapeutic, empowering and solidarity-building. In southern Africa, for example, workshops have been held for people affected by the stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS.

People are inherently story-driven – the way we understand the world is through narrative. First person stories are very powerful and emotive, particularly when they offer us a view on the world that we have not encountered previously. Because there are so few authentic indigenous voices in mainstream media, DST provides us with genuine, non-stereotypical

and often unexpected representations of people, gender roles and relationships. These stories should not be seen as just anecdotal but as a potential source of change for both creators and viewers. If they can be used to support, amplify or better articulate a policy campaign then they can be extremely influential. The power of these digital stories can have enormous value to organisational and individual processes of learning and understanding.

Community in Cyberspace: Gender, Social Movement Learning, and the Internet
Catherine J. Irving and Leona M. English, 2011
http://aeq.sagepub.com/content/61/3/262.short

How well are organisations able to make use of information and communication technology (ICT) to further their goals of promoting social movement learning and activism? Feminist non-profit organisations are sites of informal and non-formal learning where citizens learn advocacy, literacy, and the practices of social democracy. This article reports on a systematic analysis of 100 websites for feminist organisations in Canada. Websites are evaluated for content, currency, and maintenance to determine how well these sites contribute to the work of these organisations.

The paper argues that credibility is of vital importance for the ability of women's organisations to survive and function well. The condition—currency, accuracy, openness—of the website is an indicator of its functionality as a reliable source of information and of the organisation's own trustworthiness. The study reveals that 50 percent of the organisations under review did not name their sources of funding or demonstrate how these funds were used which are the very structures that are likely to provide funding to non-profit organisations. This review shows that although many feminist organisations have a web presence, it is typically underused.

There seem to be innumerable missed opportunities for feminist organisations to share knowledge, engage in community-based learning, and give voice to the marginalised. Strategies are needed to assist organisations to develop websites that are better aligned with their educational mandate. These strategies include the use of participatory approaches with organisational staff, clients, and other groups to help in the development of relevant content that furthers their civil society agenda. Attention needs to be paid to organisational effectiveness, possibly through increasing attention to a credible web presence that meets clients' learning needs and furthers social justice. Education is needed both in technical maintenance skills and in the wider-ranging issues of information sharing. The use of ICTs as instruments of social movement learning needs to be explored further and promoted.