Committee: ECOSOC

Topic: Harnessing ICT for greater access to education for girls and women

Introduction

International access to information and communication technologies will play a vital role in transforming aspects of today's global economy, improve gender-equality and income inequality and reduce poverty. These are a few examples of the many transformations this world could potentially experience with greater access to ICTs.

As a primary focus, bridging digital divide between men and women will help in the coming years in a multitude of economic and social factors.

Definition of Key Terms

ICTs - ICT stands for International access to information and communication technologies. These technologies are vital in order to improve access to education across the globe.

GWI - Graduate Women International is an organisation with an aim of empowering and girls through lifelong education. GWI mainly focuses on developing good educational systems, opening opportunities for women and girls to improve their future and lifestyle.

Gender Equality - The act of treating men and women equally, they have equal value and should receive equal respect and treatment. An example of this would be men and women who have the same job position receive the same amount of income.

Income Inequality - In the event that two individuals are being paid different amount of income for the same amount of work and or time. The reasoning for this isn't always gender based, it could also be race based.

LEDC - Less Economically Developed Country(s). A country is categorized as a LEDC by their GDP, standard living, industrial development and education.

Poverty - Poverty could be defined in a multitude of ways. These include: being in an economical state of being extreme poor or having and inferior quality lifestyle due to an insufficient amount of income.

UN ECOSOC - The United Nations Economic and Social Council committee.

General Overview

According to Intel, if 600 million women were connected to the internet in 3 years, this would translate to a rise in global GDP of between US$13 billion and US$18 billion. This proves that if we are to harness ICT for both women and girls our economy would increase. ICTs offer vast potential for women and girls: from ending poverty, to improving education and health, to agricultural productivity, and creating decent jobs.

It has also been estimated that 90% of future jobs will require ICT skills, and some 2 million new jobs will be created in the computer, mathematical, architecture and engineering fields. We should use this as a motive to start introducing ICT to as many people as we can.

Major Parties Involved

Below is the compiled list of initiatives employing ICTs to bridge the gender digital divide for rural women and girls

"Agritech using ICTs": ITU's capacity building efforts in Thailand: As part of ITU's International Girls in ICT Day last year, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society of Thailand, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Microsoft (Thailand), Cisco (Thailand) and ITU, launched a capacity building programme aimed at imparting digital skills to female students in Thailand. More than 200 female students and other community members built skills and awareness to help them use ICTs for farming. The students were trained to use mobile devices for farm applications, as well as raise awareness on use of unmanned aerial vehicles and drone technology as it relates to the development of agricultural and natural resources.

SheTrades: It is a platform launched by the International Trade Centre (ITC) for connecting women-owned businesses with sourcing companies, including multinationals. Through SheTrades, women-owned businesses get to connect to markets and internationalize, and are able to share information about their companies, products and services, and connect with buyers all over the world.

FAO Dimitra Clubs: By combining traditional communication channels and information and communication technologies, the Dimitra Clubs are stepping stones for transforming gender relations and empowering women and men in rural communities of sub-Saharan Africa (Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal). The

clubs are groups of rural women, men and young people – mixed or not – who voluntarily meet to discuss the challenges they face in their daily lives and take collective action to improve their livelihoods. ICTs (such as solar-powered radios and mobile phones with freeware instant messaging) and community radio stations act as a relay and a means to access knowledge, share information and ideas, facilitate exchange and increase self-confidence.

Sula Batsu (Costa Rica): TIC-as is a project led by Sulá Batsú with the financial support of the UN-Women Fund for Gender Equality. The main objective of TIC-as is to create conditions of employment and work for rural women in the digital technologies sector of Costa Rica. In addition, it seeks to create optimal spaces for the insertion of women in the digital economy and to promote the development of women's enterprises aimed at solving community social problems.

Next 3B: This is an initiative that seeks to empower women through smartphones and mobile applications. A pilot has been initiated in Odisha, India where women participated in a workshop to discover how a smartphone could help them in their day-to-day lives.

Wireless Women for Entrepreneurship and Empowerment (by the Digital Empowerment Foundation): Launched to create women driven ICT micro social enterprise and entrepreneurs supported by wireless Internet in impoverished locations or districts of India, and contribute to enable an environment for internet for gender inclusion and women empowerment. Vodafone Sakhi: Many Indian women are reluctant to share their mobile numbers with retailers/ agents for top-up for fear of subsequent harassment. Vodafone has launched this innovative service through which subscribers can recharge anonymously using an OTP code instead of their mobile numbers. The objective is to attract more female customers, especially in rural areas, and increase women's use of data/ voice. Vodafone estimates that around 80% of the customers are rural.

ITC Market Analysis Tools: Trade intelligence to help rural women make business decisions: The International Trade Centre has developed a suite of online tools to make global trade more transparent, helping women identify challenges and opportunities in international markets for their products and services.

1nita initiative of the Malaysian Government: Project 1nita is an e-business platform for women-led SMEs and entrepreneurs to enhance their capabilities and skills in ICT while providing them with a platform to conduct business online. It is intended to help women market their products to a wider audience. It runs in two cycles: The program is run in two cycles for each location. In the first cycle, the participants chosen are given some talks on topics like internet marketing and language in advertising. In the second cycle, which is usually after a gap of about a week, they are given, some lessons on photographic technique as well as talks and demonstrations on payment method online.

Timeline of Key Events

Timeline of events in reverse chronological order leading up to present day.
Date Description of Event :
20 March 2018 - On the 62nd commission an event named "Leveraging the Power of ICTs for Rural Women and Girls" was held at the UN Headquarters.
6 May 2016 - GWI starts working with Orange Device Group to develop the "Girls Choices Mobile App"
1919 - The International Federation of University Women (IFUW) changes to the Graduate Women International (GWI)

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

On 20 March, 2018, a side event of the 62nd Commission on the Status of Women entitled "Leveraging the Power of ICTs for Rural Women and Girls" was held at UN Headquarters in New York. The session, held in support of the EQUALS Global Partnership, was a collaboration between the ITU, FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN), GSMA (Global Mobile Industry Association), the ITC (International Trade Centre), and the Permanent Missions of Mali and Thailand to the UN.

The event highlighted the potential of ICTs to improve lives and communities in rural areas, and the need to prioritize ICT access and use, particularly among rural women and girls. Panellists discussed studies that demonstrate the persistent gender gap among rural women and girls and highlighted the risks of excluding this population from the digital revolution. These risks include increased poverty and inequalities and unsustainable growth.

During the discussion, panellists shared examples of successful initiatives that leverage ICTs to improve the lives of rural women and girls, including those offering financial and agricultural services. Session attendees obtained a list of examples from around the world illustrating how ICTs are being successfully leveraged to empower rural women and girls.

Possible Solutions

A possible solution for Harnessing ICT for greater access to education for girls and women would be implementing accessibility to technological resources and materials in places such as community centres that way girls and women without access can use them. Another great place to add "technological" divisions for women and girls would be in refugee camps, adding on to the education systems adding access to technology can inspire them to continue using tech. Delegates

note that there probably already are systems in place like this so you might want to research into how to improve those systems.

Another possible solution for this issue would be to implement required technology class or tech hours in schools. Take note that most countries don't have laws or don't require schools to use technology so this might be an area of interest.

Bibliography

Equals. "Leveraging the Power of ICTs for Rural Women and Girls at the 62nd Com." EQUALS Global Partnership to Bridge the Digital Gender Divide, EQUALS Global Partnership to Bridge the Digital Gender Divide, 6 Apr. 2018, www.equals.org/single-post/2018/04/06/Leveraging-the-Power-of-ICTs-for-Rur al-Women-and-Girls-62.
https://www.equals.org/single-post/2018/04/06/Leveraging-the-Power-of-ICTs-for-Rur al-Women-and-Girls-62

Itu. "Reshaping the Future: Women, Girls, ICTs and the SDGs." ITU News, 16 Feb. 2018, news.itu.int/reshaping-future-women-girls-icts. https://news.itu.int/reshaping-future-women-girls-icts/
"Harnessing ICTs for Greater Access to Education for Girls and Women." Statistics, www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2016/Agenda/Session/176.
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2016/Agenda/Session/176

"Bridging the Digital Divide." Plan International,
plan-international.org/education/bridging-the-digital-divide.
https://plan-international.org/education/bridging-the-digital-divide

"Sorry to Interrupt." Kami,
web.kamihq.com/web/viewer.html?source=extension_pdfhandler&extension_handler=webre quest_1&file=http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GITR_Chapter1.2_2015.pdf.

https://web.kamihq.com/web/viewer.html?source=extension_pdfhandler&extension_handler=webrequest_1&file=http%3A%2F%2Fwww3.weforum.org%2Fdocs%2FWEF_GITR_Chapter1.2_2015.pdf