Understanding gender barriers in internet access and use

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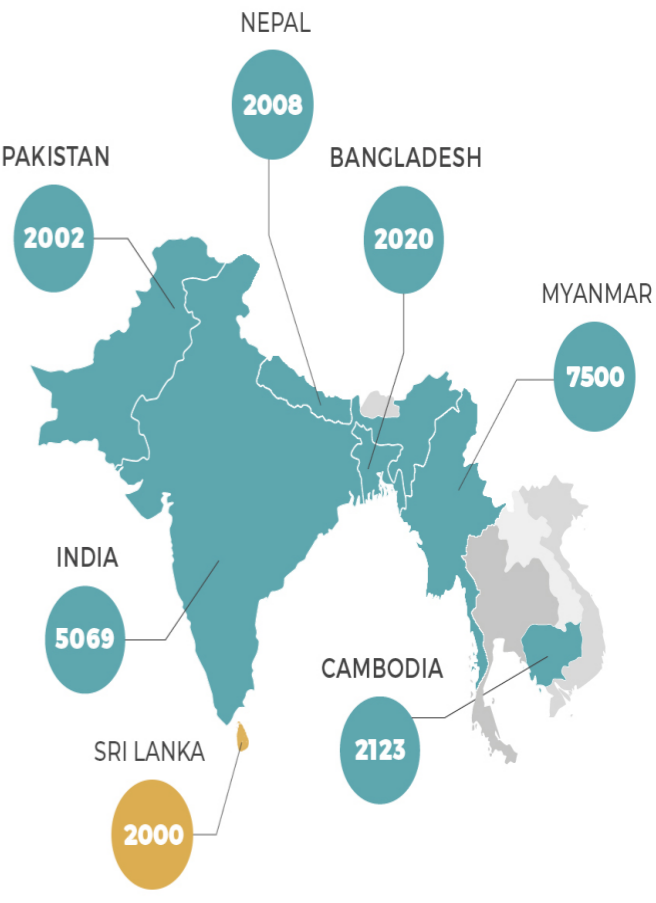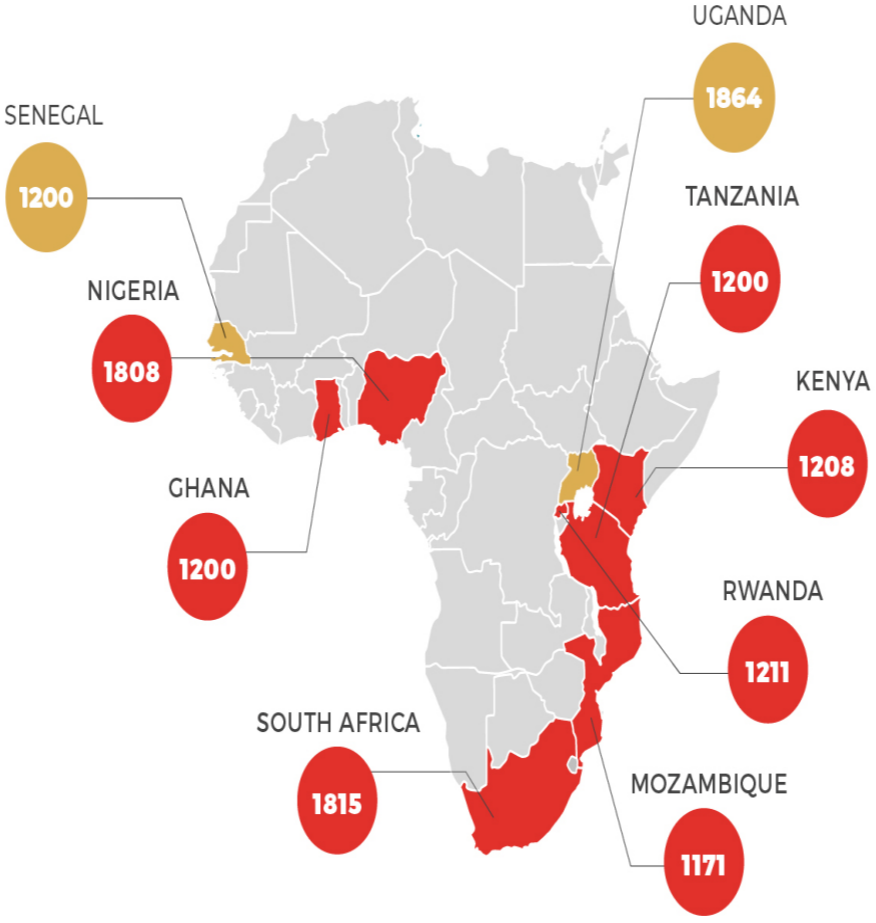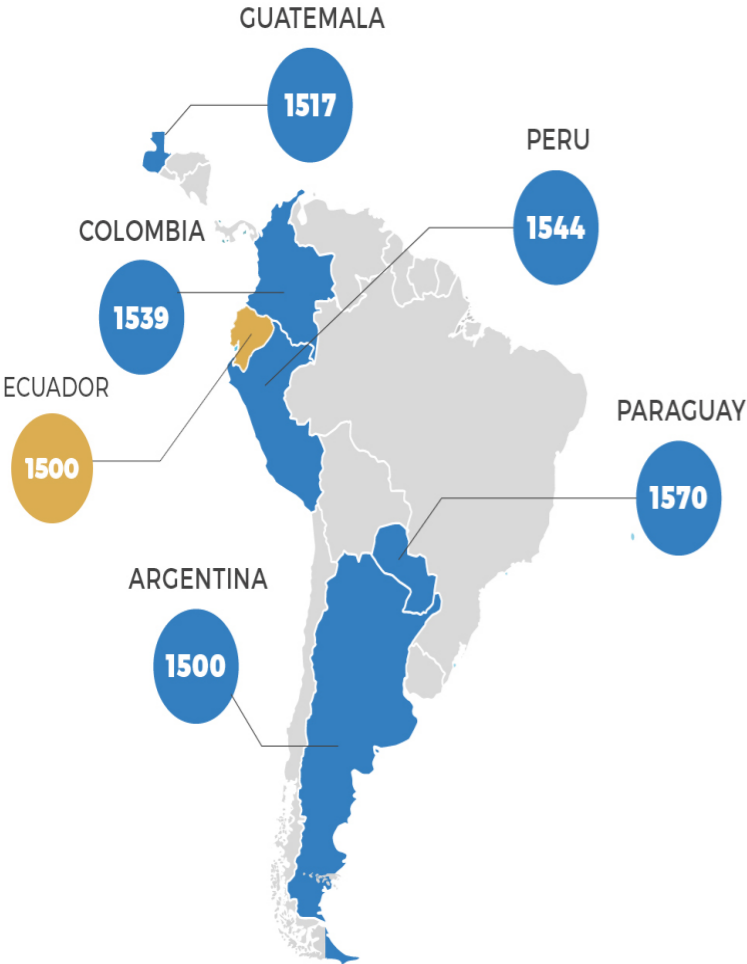
Presented to UN Office for South-South Cooperation workshop discussion on Women in Tech

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After Access?

❖ **ICT: a central part of the everyday lives of people, firms and governments**

❖ **As more people become connected (enjoy the benefits), the gap may expand**

❖ **Connectivity: necessary condition for digital participation, but insufficient given growing digital inequality**

❖ ***What challenges emerge after connectivity is achieved?***

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Nationally representative surveys of ICT access and use by households & individuals aged 15-65; In 18 developing countries; Data represents 30% of the global population; 28,900 face-to-face interviews; +/-3 margin of error;

GUATEMALA
1517

PERU
1544

COLOMBIA
1539

ECUADOR
1500

PARAGUAY
1570

ARGENTINA
1500

UGANDA
1864

SENEGAL
1200

TANZANIA
1200

NIGERIA
1808

KENYA
1208

GHANA
1200

RWANDA
1211

SOUTH AFRICA
1815

MOZAMBIQUE
1171

NEPAL
2008

PAKISTAN
2002

BANGLADESH
2020

MYANMAR
7500

INDIA
5069

CAMBODIA
2123

SRI LANKA
2000

❖ **Not shown in slides today:**
❖ **Sri Lanka, Senegal, Uganda & Ecuador**
❖ **Surveys just completed/surveys about to start/data being analyzed**
❖ **Watch www.afteraccess.net or www.lirneasia.net**

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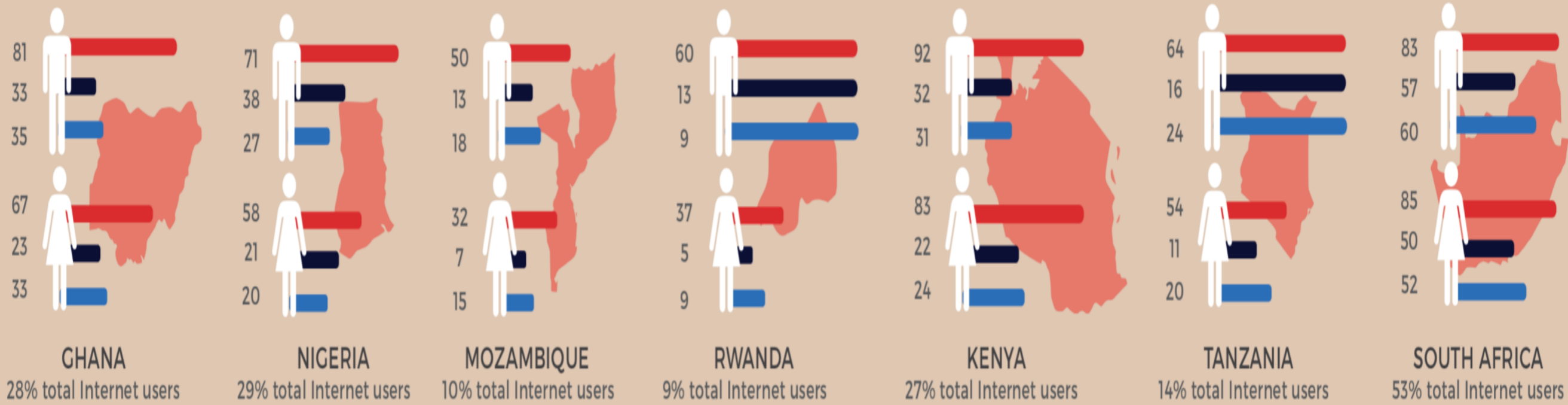
13/16
COUNTRIES **MEN OWNED MORE** PHONES THAN WOMEN

14/16
COUNTRIES **MEN USED MORE INTERNET** THAN WOMEN

❖ **Publication: After Access-Understanding the gender divide in the global south**

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Mobile ownership, smart phone ownership and internet use gender difference

AFRICA
Rwanda has the lowest Internet penetration and greatest gender disparity

GHANA
28% total Internet users

Male: 81 / 33 / 35
Female: 67 / 23 / 33

NIGERIA
29% total Internet users

Male: 71 / 38 / 27
Female: 58 / 21 / 20

MOZAMBIQUE
10% total Internet users

Male: 50 / 13 / 18
Female: 32 / 7 / 15

RWANDA
9% total Internet users

Male: 60 / 13 / 9
Female: 37 / 5 / 9

KENYA
27% total Internet users

Male: 92 / 32 / 31
Female: 83 / 22 / 24

TANZANIA
14% total Internet users

Male: 64 / 16 / 24
Female: 54 / 11 / 20

SOUTH AFRICA
53% total Internet users

Male: 83 / 57 / 60
Female: 85 / 50 / 52

● Percentage of mobile owners   ● Percentage of Internet users   ● Percentage of mobile users with a smartphone
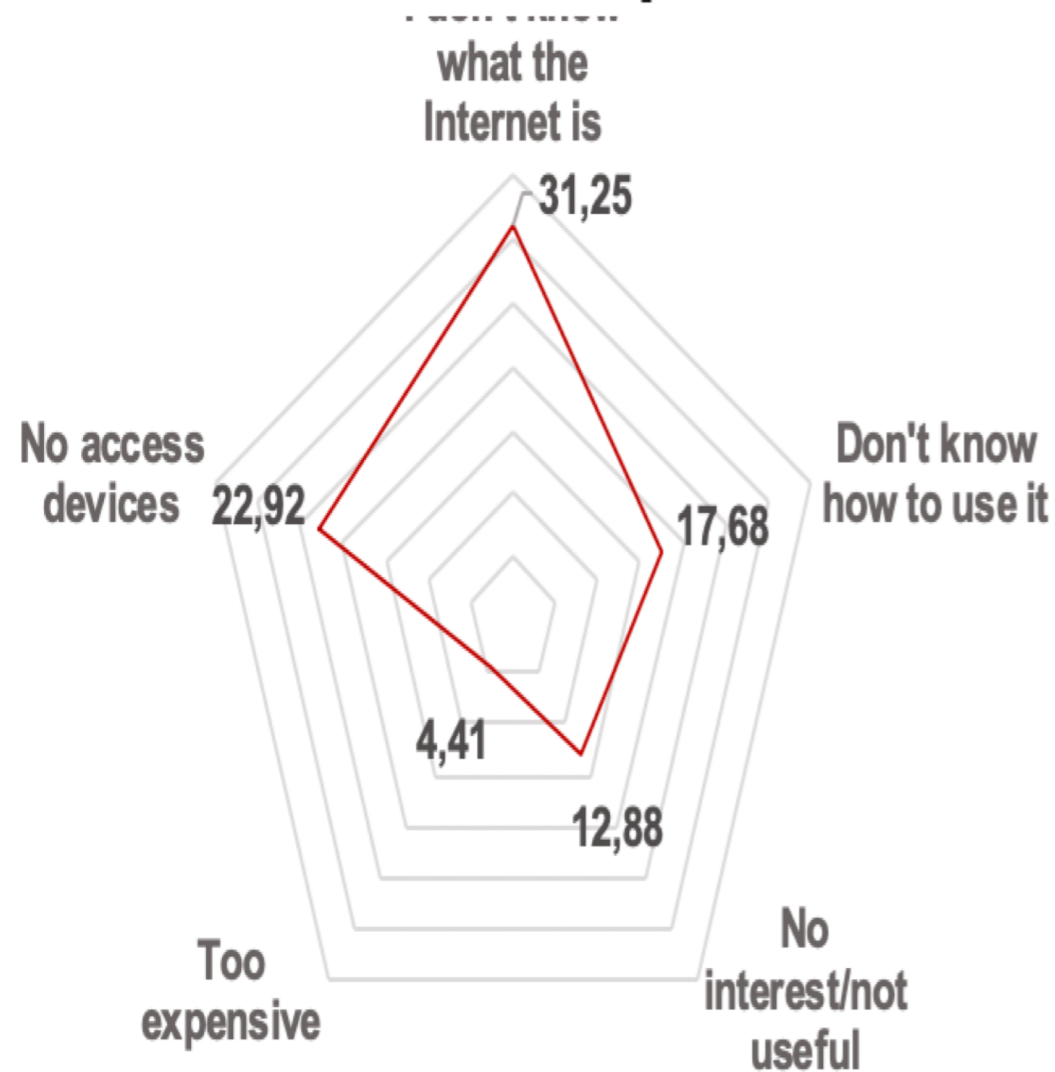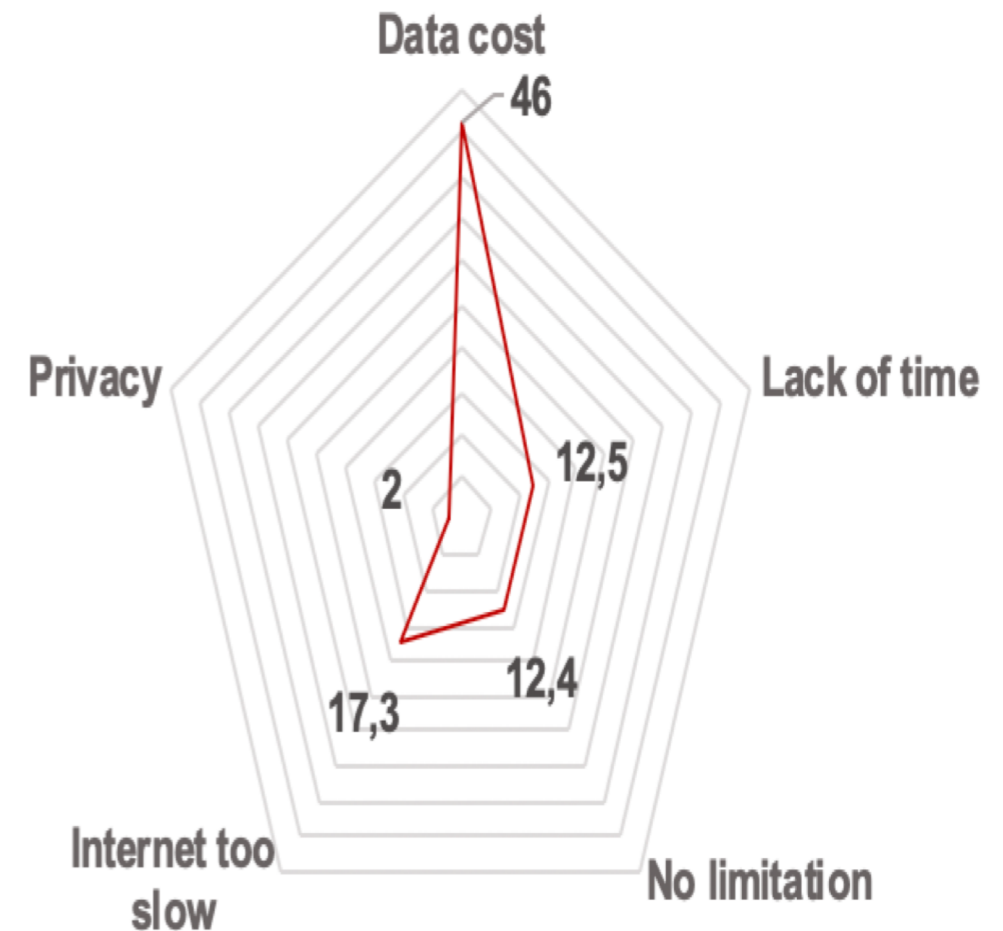
Significant gender gaps:
Rwanda and Mozambique significant gender gap of 37% in mobile phone ownership and 60% and 50% respectively for internet use
South Africa's gender gap: 12% in internet use and -4% in mobile phone ownership

Barriers to take up in Africa

- ...don't know what the Internet is — 31,25
- Don't know how to use it — 17,68
- No interest/not useful — 12,88
- Too expensive — 4,41
- No access devices — 22,92

Constraints on use in Africa

- Data cost — 46
- Lack of time — 12,5
- No limitation — 12,4
- Internet too slow — 17,3
- Privacy — 2

❖ **In Africa the cost of devices is the primary barrier for those who are not connected, while for those who are connected the reason for low usage or being offline, even if they have Internet-enabled devices, is the price of data services.**

Barriers by gender perspective

Country % breakdown by Gender		Do not know what the Internet is	No access device (computer/ smartphone)	No interest / not useful	Do not know how to use it	(no mobile coverage)	expensive
Rwanda	Male	12	35	7	1	0	34
	Female	6	51	1	4	0	31
Tanzania	Male	1	63	17	12	1	3
	Female	0.3	64	14	13	0	1
Kenya	Male	16	25	29	14	3	4
	Female	35	19	24	10	2	3
South Africa	Male	0	38	15	12	2	11
	Female	0	35	16	7	3	17
Mozambique	Male	0	74	3	15	1	0.1
	Female	0	77	3	13	0	1
Ghana	Male	44	19	8	13	4	3
	Female	43	24	10	15	1	2
Nigeria	Male	33	17	10	22	6	4
	Female	45	10	10	22	3	4

Barriers by gender barriers by location

	Rural			Urban		
	National	Male	Female	National	Male	Female
Do you own a mobile phone?	59	65	53	80	85	76
Is your mobile phone a smartphone?	19	22	15	43	45	41
Do you know what the Internet is?	41	49	33	67	74	61
Have you ever used the Internet?	17	22	12	43	52	35
Do you use social media?	15	20	11	40	49	33

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Qualitative findings on barriers

"Sometimes even when you want, you just cannot cope with the "bad" information and pictures found there. People open Facebook then they close because of such information …**This makes women to just opt out even when they want**"- Rural female respondent, South Africa.

"We just know that there is Facebook, and we are aware to say there are hackers, **but how do I protect whatever that I post on Facebook?**" (Female Rural Respondent)

"For instance a woman in the village even if she wanted to use a cyber[café], she will not do that. Imagine being in the cyber at 7pm and you are expected to be at home cooking, taking care of cows etc. Even if you have a child abroad and you want to communicate with them, it becomes very difficult..." - Peri-urban female Internet user, Kenya (Chair 2017:34 "

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Digital Paradox

❖ **More people connected greater digital equality**

❖ **Determinants of gender inequality - education and income**

❖ **Cultural factors not reveal directly by quantitative data – Asia**

❖ **Intersectionality**

❖ **Reduce digital inequality – structural inequality**

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Recommendations

❖ Even when those currently marginalised from services –disproportionately women in most countries surveyed - are connected, digital inequality will not be addressed.

❖ There is need for demand side interventions, that address not only affordability but also e-literacy and education more widely, these are as critical to digital inclusion as supply-side connectivity measures.

❖ Deeply entrenched factors such as social and cultural norms, as well as attitudes towards women need to be taken into account when analysing women's access and use of ICT.

❖ Effectively redressing the digital inequality will require transforming the structural inequalities that perpetuate economic and social exclusion and that are simply mirrored, and sometimes amplified in the digital world.

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Thank You

Research made possible

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