

Access to technology - refers to the technological **devices** and **services** available to a person.

1. What are the primary barriers women and girls face in accessing digital technology in different African contexts?

- Devices
 - **Affordability** - expensive to the majority
 - **Scarcity / Availability** - fake ones, knowledge (specifications)
 - **Cultural barriers that affect ownership** - Lack of ownership of the device by women
- Services - voice, mobile data, internet
 - **Lack of Localized Content** - it is not customized to help the people, not maximized for the people..
Cultural context is not digitized
avail content in the local language so that they can understand better and feel included
 - **Illiteracy and Education** - not very much educated, women are not represented therefore their problems are not highlighted
 - **Illiteracy in digital skills** - Prohibits women from easily accessing information and the skills that are required

2. What successful strategies or programs have been implemented to improve access to technology for women and girls?

a. Policy and Strategic

- Egypt
 - Decent life initiative
 - Fibre optic connection to the rural areas. Rural populations make up 60% of the entire population. Government supported by the private sector as well
Provision of fiber optics to the homes,
Provision of mobile towers to the villages
- India
 - The government is providing affordable data packages for internet access
 - Computer labs with free internet in schools to help with accessing the technology
- Rwanda
 - Digitization plans - Digital inclusion specifically for women
 - Sub-sector strategies - Mainstream gender inclusivity
 - Women in Tech strategy -
 - Kigali Smart Women Initiative
 - He for She commitment - focus on gender digital inclusion

- Generation Equality Action Coalition on technology and innovation for gender equality - Rwanda is co-leading

b. Programmatic

- Cameroon
 - Carav'Elles Digital Center
 - Personal Programme that gives training on digital skills base on local solutions that are developed in Cameroon
 - Provide devices to encourage online businesses and to ensure that the content that has been taught is actually being implemented.
 - Phones are basic - buying them phones with bigger capacity for the applications that will help them when it comes to the businesses.

Digital Houses program run by the ministry of women and the orange foundation

- Rwanda
 - Connect Rwanda Initiative which consisted of providing smart phone to the most vulnerable families intentionally set a 50% target of men and women
 - One laptop per child project which also had a gender quota

- Kenya

E-mentoring Africa,

as a trainer in mentorship and soft-skills. blends mentorship with guidance, values and personal development to school-age/adolescent children (upper primary and high school level) and skills transfer and employment linkages to youth who have attained employment age. Samburu girls foundation at Samburu ICT center Technovation competition in 2022

- E-GO school** is an app that aims to provide a platform that shows available scholarship opportunities for people of the Samburu community to apply for, provide guidelines for the different scholarships currently available, and may provide e-learning facilities through informational videos that will improve literacy levels for the older generation.
- EndCut** This is an app that aims to stop FGM & early marriage by alternate economic empowerment of Samburu community women. EndCut sells beaded jewelry made by the Samburu women community who are highly skilled in making the beaded jewelry. EndCut will advertise and sell the beaded jewelry work to the rest of the world as well as provide articles on the dangers of FGM.

WIE and WISP under IEEE

Development of short interviews with women and key underrepresented members which are then published in the IEEE SPS newsletters, under Series Highlights Women in Signal Processing section

<https://signalprocessingsociety.org/community-involvement/women-signal-processing>

3. How can we leverage existing infrastructure to enhance technology access for underserved communities?

- a. Expand Access Encourage African countries to utilize Universal services funds to develop the infrastructure for underserved communities to reach the last mile connectivity
- b. Invest in affordability
- c. Digital monitoring tools . Utilize tools that track the implementation and how the funds are being used
- d. Provide free access in the public places (Market, schools, hospitals, buses, parking lots)
- e. Awareness and Education on existing technologies and services
- f. Liberalize the tech sector and market by government putting structures and regulation to center the needs and rights of people which are sometimes violated by the tech private sector. Open the market to private sector and investor who can bring competition to lower prices

4. What role can partnerships play in expanding access to technology?

- a. Government to partner with telecommunication / tech services to provider services at reduced rates by maybe reducing the taxes in return.
- b. Make use of Universal Services -
- c. Providing free internet - especially in places that offer services for women
- d. Partnering with telecommunication companies whereby the services can be offered then paid over a long period of time