

Engendering Management and Regulation of ICTs

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Why don't women have access to ICTs?

- Infrastructure is expensive to install and equipment is costly;
- Women are not seen as an attractive market in an increasingly commercially run sector;
- Content needed is inadequate in quantity and quality;
- Expensive ICTs are unaffordable for the poor of which women make up a large proportion

Why don't women have access to ICTs?

- Women's levels of literacy and education
- Much Internet and e-commerce activity requires a degree of technological and other literacy that women do not always have, especially in poorer or rural areas of developing countries
- Women's needs have traditionally taken lower priorities in the ICT environments since there are few female players.

Why don't women have access to ICTs?

- The percentage of women decision-makers and opinion makers is small, and of this, even fewer public and private sector players have a critical mass of empowered women.
- Social and cultural factors such as access to money, security, and availability of food in an often-unequal family and work environment determine whether women can benefit from services.

Policy and Regulatory Issues in Women's Access to ICTs

- Gender disaggregated data.
- Gender sensitisation and training of regulatory staff --with a focus on gender and related issues of concern to women and mechanisms to ensure that regulatory/policy information is readily accessible to women.
- An important need is that women are involved in the regulatory process itself.

Ensuring ICT as a tool of empowerment

1. Telecom Sector Liberalization and Competition
opening the sector to competition can cause user costs to decrease.
2. Independent Regulation
3. Awareness Building

4. Reducing Cost of Infrastructure Creation and Operation

- fees for licenses
- freedom to choose services and service areas
- waive business license fees for women-run businesses
- incentives for businesses to provide special packages or services for women; or hire more women
- Interconnection of old and new networks
- Technology support or allow new and cheaper technologies
- Low taxes and duties on equipment
- Use open source or cheap software
- Provide funds or research for innovative technologies to reach disadvantaged groups
- Mandate equitable and convenient access e.g. ensuring public telecenters are installed quickly in a cheap and non-bureaucratic fashion.

5) Content

- Regulatory and policy support for creating, procuring, and processing content of value to women, and training and awareness building.
- Licensing of women's intellectual property rights.
- Policy and regulatory support for translating relevant material.
- Regulation/control of abusive or exploitative content.

6) Intermediation providing personnel at computer centres

Questions

1. Can anyone contribute examples of how women or other civil society groups have organized to affect telecommunication regulation?
2. Are there other examples of how regulation can support the wider use of technologies in the population?
3. What kind of regulation will support women's e-commerce and entrepreneurial activities?

4. Is it reasonable to expect that regulation and policy have a role to play in encouraging the development of content for women? Would it be a more efficient use of resources and effort to support women's groups to master ICTs and develop content for themselves?

5. Can content, language, educational/literacy level issues be resolved and sustained through regulation, or should steps be taken to develop so-called "economically sustainable" approaches (i.e. private sector-based)? Is there a role for government or should efforts be devoted to supporting grassroots initiatives, and if so, by whom?