WORLD WIDE WEB
FOUNDATION

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ONLINE

REPORT CARD

GHANA

Measuring Progress, Driving Action
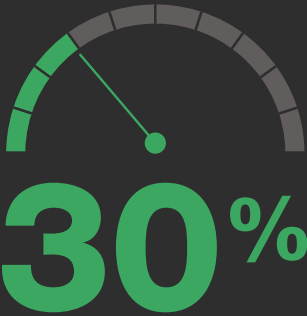
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GHANA

OVERALL SCORE:

30%

INTERNET ACCESS & WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

SCORE: 2

Less than 20% of women in Ghana have access to the Internet. The national ICT policy recognises ICTs as a tool for fighting gender inequality. The 2015 national gender policy also recognises the gender gap in access to technology, digital knowledge and ICT skills. However, there are no clear targets in place to monitor these objectives, and data on female Internet users is not regularly collected.

AFFORDABILITY

SCORE: 4

1GB of data costs over 7% of average monthly income. The government has established some public Community Information Centers, but many are not fully operational, with breakdown of equipment and lack of connectivity cited as concerns. Public libraries increasingly provide ICT access.

DIGITAL SKILLS & EDUCATION

SCORE: 1

Ghana has a policy on compulsory ICT education in schools and integration of ICT into teacher training, but implementation has been slow and there are no specific gender targets for women or girls' digital skills and education. No data is available on the number of schools with Internet access.

RELEVANT CONTENT & SERVICES

SCORE: 4

A few civil society organisations maintain websites that provide information and services related to reproductive health, but more needs to be done in this area. 12% of women in Ghana have access to mobile financial services.

ONLINE SAFETY

SCORE: 5

The Ghana Police Service and its Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit received some training on ICT based violence against women, but responses are currently inadequate due to lack of resources. A Data Protection Act was passed in 2012, which includes an independent commission mandated to enforce compliance.

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP: A 5 POINT ACTION PLAN

1   **ESTABLISH SPECIFIC TARGETS TO CLOSE THE ICT GENDER GAP.** The National ICT for Accelerated Development Policy should be reviewed to include targets for improving women and girls' access to the Web and and bridging the ICT gender gap. Data on women's Internet access and use should be collected annually.

2   **MAKE THE INTERNET MORE AFFORDABLE.** The 20% import tax imposed on mobile phones in Ghana must be removed, as promised by the government. Consider adopting pricing models and/or tax incentives to subsidise rural Internet access. Multimedia centres offering public Internet access should be made available throughout Ghana.

3   **IMPROVE DIGITAL SKILLS INTERVENTIONS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS.** Government must incorporate ICT literacy into teacher training and school curricula, and encourage women and girls to enter science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programmes. Adult ICT centres and programmes should also be established to support women's economic empowerment.

4   **MAKE RELEVANT CONTENT AND SERVICES FOR WOMEN AVAILABLE ONLINE.** Develop a systematic approach to including women and girls in the design and programming of ICT hardware and software so that products, services, and content are relevant to women. Train and support women's groups to create content and use the Internet and social media tools to amplify women's voices.

5   **ENSURE A SAFE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT.** Existing policies should be revised to address online violence against women (VAW), and awareness campaigns should be mounted to publicise the legal processes available for seeking redress. The Ghana Police Service and the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) must be trained and equipped with all resources (technical, human, financial) to fight all forms of digitally enabled violence against women.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The United Nations recently made gender-equitable access to information and communications technologies (ICTs) central to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which set the global development agenda until 2030. Why? ICTs are powerful. They can help to deliver improved healthcare, quality education for all, financial inclusion, more accountable government, and much more. In adopting the SDGs, all countries have pledged to prioritise universal Internet access, and to use ICTs to empower women.

But much hard work lies ahead if we are to translate this vision into reality. A formidable gender gap in Internet access, digital skills and online rights exists - our Women's Rights Online research shows that in many communities, women are 50% less likely than men to be online and 30-50% less likely to use the Internet for economic and political empowerment. Women face many barriers - including high costs, lack of know-how, and a scarcity of relevant and empowering content - as well as social and legal obstacles to speaking freely and privately online.

The Web Foundation and partners have prepared these gender audits to help countries assess what they need to do to overcome the gender digital divide. Media Foundation for West Africa has taken the lead, in consultation with other national stakeholders, on identifying concrete steps that government can take in the next year to address the challenges and gaps identified. We hope that this report card and action plan will spark debate and galvanise policy change.

A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY:

We based our scores on 14 simple indicators for which reliable empirical evidence exists, and grading was done in the second quarter of 2016. See the accompanying overview for a description of the indicators and sources used. A full methodology is available on our website.

WORLD WIDE WEB FOUNDATION

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