



ACCRA SUMMIT ACTION PLAN

The Web Foundation — as a champion of digital equality and women’s rights online — convened the inaugural [Africa Summit on Women and Girls in Technology](#) to bring together brilliant minds in the space. With a strong focus on the role of policy, we set out to develop a set of key actions that policymakers, activists, teachers, technologists, and women community leaders must take to ensure that women and girls in Africa have access to an open, safe, and empowering internet. The following is an action plan developed out of discussions at the 2016 Africa Summit on Women and Girls in Technology, and completed in consultation with Summit participants. At the bottom, you will find actions that we at the Web Foundation are committed to doing in order to close the digital gender gap and ensure digital equality for all Africans.

1. Build Partnerships, Build a Movement

We need a movement of women technology leaders to drive digital revolutions for women and girls across Africa. This movement is needed to push for a shared vision, a movement to REACT¹ to the policy failure to demand change and achieve success. The movement will build consensus between actors to build an African feminist digital revolution. It will be based around a few key understandings:

- Women must play an active role in leading and contributing to ICT policies, and we must change the environment so that women feel empowered to lead and drive innovation in technology.
- Women’s political and civil rights cannot be divorced from their economic and social rights — online and offline.

To realise this vision, we must build partnerships among movements — for example, we need the women’s rights movements to interact with our budding women in tech movement! We must leverage these partnerships to ensure that we are deliberate about how we use technology to create a more equal world. We also need to engage men as allies to advance the agenda of women’s rights both online and offline since, in most cases, they are still the gatekeepers of power and decision-making.

¹ REACT = Rights, Education, Affordable Access, Content, Targets. See our [Women’s Rights Online scorecards action agenda](#) for more.

1.1. Develop a network of role models and mentors

To build a strong movement, we must also develop networks that enable learning, sharing, and growing. To do this, we must ensure that women and girls have safe spaces to learn, work, and collaborate online and offline.

It is also important to increase women's confidence across the ICT ecosystem — we now need to link young women and girls to women leaders for mentorship and knowledge exchange. In addition to making time to engage and advocate on these issues, we need to make room at the table for other women to join — especially young women and girls!

1.2. (Re)claim the internet as a tool for building women's active citizenship, leadership, and movement building

The work to build a movement and mentorship network must go hand-in-hand with work to (re)claim the internet as a tool to serve this and other purposes. **The internet HAS to be a safe public space for expression by African women and girls — politically, socially and culturally.**²

This calls for confidence around feminist internet discourse, and thought leadership by African women and girls on their truths in a globalising world. To this end, we must tell the stories of how the internet is being (re)claimed as a tool for women's active citizenship and self-expression, and amplify stories that already exist about making this a reality.

Active citizenship of women and girls on the internet demands that they have a right of reply. To exercise this right, women must be online, since stories of their experiences are shared on the web. (For more on this and to see where we currently stand, review our [Women's Rights Online work](#)).

2. Collect Evidence, Measure Impact

We need to hold governments accountable to what they've promised and ensure that they take action to developing digital and gender equality. To do so will require them to develop gender-responsive policies. A gender-responsive policy is one that includes:

1. Clear, time-bound targets
2. Gender-disaggregated data and research
3. Budget allocated to implement needed programs

We need to advocate for and assist with (where possible) the tracking of gender data and measuring the impact of policies and programmes on women, in order to inform future

² See also: [Feminist Principles of the Internet](#).

policy. As Nancy Hafkin has said, to inform policy we need data because “without data there is no visibility; without visibility there is no priority.”³

We need a framework to monitor the types of outreach and engagements we have with government to see if/how/to what extent the discussions translate into practice.

3. Design Technology By and For Women

Designing FOR women should be WITH women and, more importantly, BY women.

To guide our engagement with and review of technology designed for women, we must remember that It’s not just about building an app, it’s about using technology to solve important community problems faced by women.

We also have to continue and scale efforts to engage and expose girls to technology design from a young age, to empower them to be creators of the technologies that will impact their and their peers’ lives. There is an urgent need to break down common stereotypes and misconceptions about women in technology — for example, that they can’t be technology designers or innovators.

It is also critical to recognise that not every woman who can benefit from being online is online; we must keep this top-of-mind, and work to extend the benefits of being online to these women, even if and while they are still offline.

4. Scale Successful Initiatives

To reach 100% of women, we have to learn to translate grassroots efforts into policy-level interventions. We must demand and champion for scale, especially with initiatives and good practices that have shown success. We need to educate women who are already working in/on technology to advocate for the importance of their work at the policy level.

Systemic barriers and policy failures are keeping women offline, but policy failure can be reversed by focusing on [Rights, Education, Access, Content, Targets \(REACT\)](#).

We need to demand that dormant funding is unlocked (e.g. national Universal Service Funds) and used to bridge the digital gender gap.

³ Hafkin, Nancy J. “Some thoughts on gender and telecommunications/ICT statistics and indicators.” January 2003, http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/wict02/doc/pdf/Doc46_Erev1.pdf. If interested in learning more about gender issues in ICT Policy, please read Nancy Hafkin’s seminal paper on this: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/ict2002/reports/Paper-NHafkin.PDF>

Web Foundation Commitments

To demonstrate leadership in commitment to action, we highlight below what we at the Web Foundation are already and will be doing to achieve digital equality in Africa, and around the world. We will report back to you on these action items at the next Summit (tentatively planned for 2018) and in the interim, via our website and the [A4AI newsletter](#).

1. **We will continue supporting existing and prospective new partners in our [Women's Rights Online](#) network** by developing adequate policy and advocacy toolkits for gender-responsive national ICT policies. The Web Foundation will also continue to engage at regional and international levels to advocate for appropriate policies at those levels.
2. **We will set up a mentorship network** to ensure that we get more women and girls engaging in ICT policy at local and international levels. If you're interested in being a part of such a network, please let us know through [this form](#) (see Part 2, as you sign up for your commitments)
3. **We will launch a bottom-up, multi-country campaign to close the gender digital divide.** This campaign will work with partners across Africa and the globe to call for policies that guarantee: (1) free public internet access facilities in every community; (2) devices and data cheap enough for everyone to afford; (3) digital and data literacy for all as part of the basic right to education; and (4) women's rights to participate in online life without harassment, intimidation or surveillance.
4. **We will host a second Africa Summit on Women and Girls in Technology in 2018** to bring us back together, including many more women and girls, to take stock, celebrate, reflect, and strengthen the movement.