



**WORLD WIDE WEB
FOUNDATION**

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS ONLINE
IN THE CARIBBEAN REGION**

REPORT CARD



**JAMAICA AND
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO**

June 2022

Measuring Progress, Driving Action

The Women's Rights Online Digital Gender Gap Scorecard was developed to ensure that there is sustained commitment and implementation of policies for digital gender equality. The scorecard is based on five themes which are divided into 14 indicators:

1. Internet Access and Women's Empowerment
 2. Affordability
 3. Digital Skills and Education
 4. Relevant Content and Services for Women
 5. Online Safety
-

Desktop and survey research was carried out by partners in Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago between 2021-2022 to assess the extent to which women and men enjoy equal ICT (Information Communication Technology) opportunities. These opportunities involve the ability to access and use the internet affordably and safely, learn digital skills, build new technologies, use relevant content and services, and claim one's rights online.

Both Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago scored relatively well in *Internet Access and Women's Empowerment* and *Relevant Content and Services*, but are falling behind in ensuring *Affordability* and *Online Safety*.

A score of 54% for Jamaica and 55% for Trinidad and Tobago suggests that the countries have taken some basic steps to improve women's access to digital services, but much more work is needed.



JAMAICA

OVERALL SCORE:

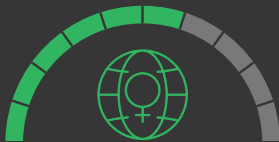


54%

Jamaica has experienced the fastest mobile phone adoption rate in the Caribbean region. A 2011 study cited in the report shows 52% of women with internet access, compared to 48% of men. Survey respondents predominantly access the internet at home, followed by access at work and at school. Although women use the internet slightly more than men overall, there is a predominance of unreliable internet service coverage in rural communities which put these residents at a severe disadvantage (and where gender digital divides are larger). This calls for more innovative approaches to expand low-cost internet coverage and connectivity across the country.

Jamaica has policies in the ICT sector that seek to address existing digital divides and promote universal access and affordability for all Jamaicans. However, they do not explicitly set out concrete strategies to close gender divides.

While there is relative equality among women and men in terms of internet access, the high cost of the internet, the lack of women in computing jobs, and the lack of emphasis on online safety show that policymakers need to further integrate and implement women's rights in digital policies.



INTERNET ACCESS AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

SCORE: 6

Although 52% of women are connected to the internet (compared to 48% of men), educational institutions can still create more awareness for opportunities for women using technology and working in technology fields. Rural areas require ICT education and awareness for women. More sex-aggregated ICT data is needed to inform specific gender policy goals.



AFFORDABILITY

SCORE: 4

Jamaica's lowest score was *Affordability*, at 4.0. The high monthly cost of internet connection is a barrier to women's as well as lower-income individuals' digital access and digital education and inclusion. Zero-rated offerings and free-WiFi services and access points should be introduced across Jamaica to address affordability challenges.



DIGITAL SKILLS & EDUCATION

SCORE: **4**

At the secondary school level, the ratio of males to females in computer studies is 1:1, however at the tertiary level for technology students and ICT graduates this shifts drastically to 70:30 in favour of males. Technology clubs, competitions, and events could be made more available for women and girls, as well as incentives for women in the ICT sector. Innovative approaches are needed to provide schools with internet access, as currently 22% of schools are without internet access, and 63% do not have adequate access.



ONLINE SAFETY

SCORE: **5**

Online safety received a 5 because there is not enough awareness of online rights. It appears that at the legislative level Jamaica has an adequate legal framework to support online safety for women, however there is no publicly available database of cases prosecuted under the Cybercrimes Act for instance of violence against women.

There is also a lack of clear information on preventing cyber crimes against women online. There is a need for more public education, engagement of women's rights advocates, the police service and the media to create awareness among women regarding online risks and safety measures. More in-depth research and ongoing data collection should be done to provide scientific evidence to inform policies, interventions and advocacy to help improve women's rights online in the country.



RELEVANT CONTENT & SERVICES

SCORE: **8**

Jamaica's best performing score was 7.5 for *Relevant Content and Services for Women*. Access to information and services about women's health is provided by both government and non-governmental organizations. There is still room for wider distribution of this material. The score is not higher because digital financial services are not as widely used as they could be. More needs to be done to enable the increased creation of relevant local user content and applications.

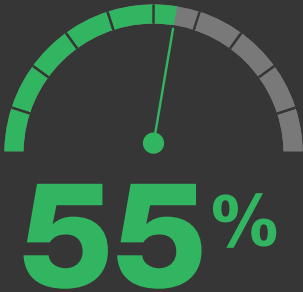
RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 Existing policies should be updated with gender equality targets and budget allocations to facilitate implementation and monitoring of sex-disaggregated data and gender-responsive ICT policymaking.
- 2 Projects and initiatives like hackathons, robotics and tech competitions are contributing to young women's empowerment in technology and should be made more widespread in rural areas and integrated in school and connectivity programs.
- 3 Zero-rated offerings and free-WiFi services and access points should be introduced across Jamaica to address affordability challenges.
- 4 Public education to create awareness among women regarding online risks and safety measures should be informed by in-depth research. More data is needed to inform policies, interventions and advocacy for women's rights and online safety in the country.



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

OVERALL SCORE:



While the government has committed to addressing gender inequality and discrimination in Trinidad & Tobago, more gender data is needed in the ICT sector to inform gender-responsive policymaking. Educational and private institutions offer ICT women's empowerment programs. The government has policies to improve access and affordability of ICT tools. Plans for ICT training for teachers exist, which may pave the way for girls and women to be involved in technology. The highest score for the Trinidad & Tobago Gender Digital Divide Audit Scorecard was 9.0 in *Relevant Content and Services for Women*. Digital health information is widely available for women. The information is user-friendly, yet it could still be disseminated to a wider audience. The lowest score was *Affordability*.



INTERNET ACCESS AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

SCORE: **5**

Trinidad & Tobago has a legislative and policy architecture for the ICT sector that seeks to address the digital divide, universal access and affordability, but not explicitly gender divides in ICT. NGOs, private sector, tertiary institutions and schools are leading multiple initiatives to support women's empowerment in technology. However, unreliable internet service coverage in rural communities puts these residents at a severe disadvantage, which calls for more innovative approaches to expand low-cost internet coverage and connectivity.



AFFORDABILITY

SCORE: **3**

The lowest score was a 3 for *Affordability*. The high cost of a monthly internet connectivity plan was reported by survey participants as the most significant factor limiting their personal internet usage. Internet service strategies to enhance availability, accessibility and affordability of free and low-cost public internet access are being rolled out and should be intensified. For example, free WiFi access points at community centers and libraries exist, and should be further supported.



DIGITAL SKILLS & EDUCATION

SCORE: **6**

There is good steady progress reported on basic digital skills training and ICT qualifications of teachers (at the primary and secondary level). ICT training is provided to teachers - however, the overall levels of ICT availability can be improved. Barriers that persist include the need for maintenance of ICT systems across schools.

Projects and initiatives like hackathons, robotics and tech competitions are contributing to young women's empowerment in technology, and could be made more widespread in rural areas and integrated in school programs. There needs to be more emphasis on how to include more women in the ICT sector.



ONLINE SAFETY

SCORE: **4**

Online safety scored low, at 3.5. The survey indicated lack of awareness of online rights and how to respond to cybercrimes. Only 26% of survey respondents reported having attended training on online safety. There is a lack of public awareness about online rights, and an absence of structured citizen information programs on cybercrimes. There is legislation in Trinidad & Tobago with adequate framework to support online safety for women. Unfortunately, public databases are not available regarding cases prosecuted under the Cybercrimes Act (for example, regarding violence against women).



RELEVANT CONTENT & SERVICES

SCORE: **9**

Research shows that there is a wide availability of government and non-governmental agencies that provide user-friendly information about reproductive and sexual health rights and services for women and girls online, but strategies are needed to make the information more widely available. There is limited reported usage of digital financial services. 32% of survey respondents report never using their mobile phone for monetary transactions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 Existing policies should be updated with gender targets and budget allocations to facilitate implementation of gender-responsive ICT policies and systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data.
- 2 Public education to create awareness among women regarding online risks and safety measures should be informed by in-depth research. More data (and publication of open data) is needed to inform policies, interventions and advocacy for women's rights and online safety in the country.
- 3 More needs to be done to enable the increased creation of relevant local user content and applications.
- 4 There needs to be more sustained support of women in technology (particularly for unemployed school leavers and graduates), and women's enrolment at tertiary level ICT studies. This is needed to drive equality for women as digital citizens, ICT professionals and leaders in the digital economy.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

5 GENDER EQUALITY



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. Name of Partner 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.



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