

MAY 2021

Asia-Pacific Generation Equality Dialogue

# TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Breakout Room  
Insights



## **ACTION ROOM 1: BRIDGE THE GENDER GAP IN DIGITAL ACCESS AND COMPETENCIES**

### **Facilitator:**

**Zara Rapoport**

Asia Pacific Regional Lead on  
Gender and Inclusion, Plan  
International

### **Discussant 1:**

**Sristi Joshi Malla**

Chairperson, SABAH Nepal

### **Discussant 2:**

**Jill Tang**

Co-founder, Ladies Who Tech

WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO  
THEN COLLECTIVELY DISCUSS  
AND IDENTIFY:

(i) 2-3- Priority actions for this  
region for the next 5 years (based  
on the area of discussion) – and we  
can link these recommendations  
to other concerns for women and  
girls

(ii) Up to 2 recommendations of:  
(a) strategies and/or  
(b) opportunities for  
strengthening multi-stakeholder  
intra-regional collaboration and  
collective action. It would be good  
to be clear on which kinds of  
collaboration will be key

## **KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:**

### **INSIGHT 1**

Women and girls(at all stages of life) are underrepresented in ICT/STEM education, workforce (such as engineering, computer programming, coding, robotics); mentorship is low; discrimination in hiring and promotion, harassment, pay gaps, balancing work and life, and lack of corporate policies supporting career development

### **INSIGHT 2**

Gender norms and gender stereotypes limit girls' participation and engagement in ICT field; limited exposure to female role models

### **INSIGHT 3**

Online threats of violence; privacy and security; contents and language; education, training, skill development- easy apps that can prevent GBV-small changes can make it easy for them

### **INSIGHT 4**

Home-based workers (esp. Women) are invisible in the national accounting system; hardest hit in the pandemic -online training, accessible information; at least basic services to be provided-handling money, banking(know-how)

## INSIGHT 5

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Recognize women entrepreneurs' power and build their capacity

## INSIGHT 6

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Important to generate more statistics on ICT

## INSIGHT 7

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Mindset change- to help women engage in ICT

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

### RECOMMENDATION 1

**Invest in women and girls for digital empowerment through public-private partnerships** between education systems, governments and companies working in 21st century skills and technologies; online training for livelihood; **partnership with women and girls led groups.** (learning from pandemic experience); **increase accountability of decision makers-measurable outcomes**

### RECOMMENDATION 2

**Leave no one behind especially the marginalized women Home based workers** (esp. women) through financial incentive schemes - such as scholarship programs and social protection to draw young women and girls into innovation and technology. Improve affordability for digital connectivity and invest in girl-centered solutions and innovations

### RECOMMENDATION 3

**Create an inclusive, gender-equal virtual world** by investing in innovative gender-responsive STEAM/ICT; **provide capital and start up for innovation; online marketing (value chain), breaking rural urban divide**

### RECOMMENDATION 4

**Promote social norms change** and support girls' school-to-work transition through career guidance, mentorships and work experience programs

## ACTION ROOM 2: INVEST IN FEMINIST TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

### Facilitator:

**Philomena Gnanapragasam**  
Director, Asia-Pacific Institute  
for Broadcasting  
Development

### Discussant 1:

**Dr. Kalpana Viswanath**  
Co-founder and CEO, Safetipin

### Discussant 2:

**Binita Shrestha**  
Founder, Women in STEAM

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## KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

### INSIGHT 1

Key elements that need to be addressed to get more feminist in tech: unemployment, income inequality, privacy, algorithmic bias, access and machine

### INSIGHT 2

The distinction between women-in-technology and **transformative feminist technology**

### INSIGHT 3

Technology as enabler. How do we make it as the enabler in many areas such as health, safety, work, governance, education, data for good, social change, mobility and many others

### INSIGHT 4

Girls/Women in Data infographics: Women in Nepal. 36.3% of employed women in Nepal have completed secondary education. 81% of the female population in Nepal aged 15 or above are economically active. 65.5% females are in the formal sector (source: Nepal labour force survey 2017-2018)

### INSIGHT 5

STEM Status of girls/women in Nepal: 7.8% researchers in Nepal are female. (UNESCO, 2018). 14.7% of women are in STEM fields. (World Bank)

## INSIGHT 6

Only about 30% of female student STEM-related fields in higher education. (UNESCO, 2016). Over 200,000 women graduated from STEM fields (Statistica, 2016). Only 28% of women are in the science and technology workforce NSB, 2015)

## INSIGHT 7

One of the reasons for the attrition of women from tech employment from Binita's presentation and Kalpana's systemic causes, is the responsibility of care. So redistribution of care is really important

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

#### RECOMMENDATION 1

Government could invest in foundation: introduce STEAM disciplines to primary and secondary educational curriculums, capacitate the teachers/educators, encourage girls practices their rights, expose the relatable role models, support the tech and innovation initiative led by girls/women, funding opportunities for women-led business

#### RECOMMENDATION 2

Identify the consequences of the problem on few role models, tech and data mentors, women leaders and female STEAM educators, less females ending up at undergraduate degree, symptoms of the problem at the pipeline: adolescent girls from the middle schools. The root causes: early stereotype and pre-defined gender roles; and problem starts at primary-secondary schools

#### RECOMMENDATION 3

Policy and laws that will allow the data space to design technology for women

#### RECOMMENDATION 4

Widespread awareness campaign on the feminist technology and innovation

#### RECOMMENDATION 5

"Letting women know it's fine to be not perfect" would enable women to be comfortable to failure and taking a risk will increase having more women in STEM and feminist technology in whole

#### RECOMMENDATION 6

Providing more opportunities from the states in the economic side for feminist technology and innovation

## **ACTION ROOM 3: BUILD INCLUSIVE, TRANSFORMATIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS**

### **Facilitator:**

**Jake Bell**

APAC Partnerships Manager,  
Code.org

### **Discussant 1:**

**Meng Yan**

Global Head of International  
Partnerships, Ant Group

### **Discussant 2:**

**Aishath Adnan**

Co-Founder, Women in Tech

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## **KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:**

### **INSIGHT 1**

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Focus on 3D holistic approach - Digital finance, Digital Skills and Digital Development Opportunities

### **INSIGHT 2**

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Focus on initiatives to support girls' school-to-work transition, such as career guidance at school, apprenticeships, mentorships and work experience programmes – supporting girls' future aspirations and creating pathways for them to transition into the STEM workforce

### **INSIGHT 3**

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Connecting STEM professionals with girls in schools for role modelling and mentoring – and foster a cadre of girls to lead the way for the next generation

### **INSIGHT 4**

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Address lack of data and data bias

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

### RECOMMENDATION 1

Establish public-private partnerships between education systems, governments and companies working in emerging technologies

### RECOMMENDATION 2

Increase access to STEM education through increased digital connectivity for all children, especially for girls in hard-to-reach areas with limited capacity

### RECOMMENDATION 3

Instigate family-friendly policies to make workplaces more attractive to women

### RECOMMENDATION 4

Focus on financial incentive schemes – such as scholarship in STEM – to draw young women into STEM post-secondary education

## **ACTION ROOM 4: PREVENT AND ELIMINATE ONLINE AND TECH- FACILITATED GBV AND DISCRIMINATION**

### **Facilitator:**

**Maha Muna**  
UNICEF

### **Discussant 1:**

**Nihat Dad**  
Executive Director  
Digital Rights Foundation

### **Discussant 2:**

**Soni Joshi**  
Co-founder, Zonta Club of  
Kathmandu

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## **KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:**

### **INSIGHT 1**

COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of connecting to services available and referral mechanisms

### **INSIGHT 2**

Online access may exacerbate vulnerability to online violence, which disproportionately impacts women and girls. Accountability mechanisms for safety must be strengthened, and adapted to specificity in Asia and the Pacific. Recognition that online violence is an extension of offline violence requiring systems and social responses

### **INSIGHT 3**

Engagement of communities and addressing negative gender norms is an effective prevention strategy

### **INSIGHT 4**

With increased participation in public spaces, including through political participation, women and girls may be exposed to cyber violence

### **INSIGHT 5**

Where there is lack of trust in legal and justice protection mechanisms, reporting may be muted



## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

### RECOMMENDATION 1

Safety protocols in online access must be adapted to specificity of Asia and the Pacific. Example provided of a cyber harassment helpline in Pakistan (Nan Dad, Digital Rights Foundation)

### RECOMMENDATION 2

Cyber tech laws and enforcement agencies can be effective in supporting protection, reporting and addressing complaints with a gender-sensitive response

### RECOMMENDATION 3

Continue to invest in addressing social norms to address the drivers of violence, and ensure support from family, education institutions and communities through awareness and advocacy campaigns (Soni Joshi, Zonta Kathmandu)

### RECOMMENDATION 4

Engaging with judges and police to strengthen systems - facilitate access to justice, reporting, and enforcement of legal recourse

### RECOMMENDATION 5

Networking and coordination between NGOs and in partnership with UN agencies to strengthen collaboration and cross-national partnerships (replicating lessons learned on helpline access, for example)