What is the gender digital divide?

Despite the growing concern over the gendered dimensions of Internet use and digitization, the global Internet gender gap increased from 11% in 2013 to 12% in 2017, equating to 250 million fewer women online.

The unequal distribution of women’s access to and use of technology and their place in the technology industry, known as the ‘Gender Digital Divide’, not only adversely impacts women and girls, but also affects the economy and society as a whole. To close this gap, gender digital inclusion was integrated into the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda.

What is the value of mapping projects addressing the gender digital divide?

EQUALS¹, the global partnership to bridge the gender digital divide, recognizes that collective challenges demand collective solutions. As there are already several initiatives related to the objectives of SDG 5b, our work to bridge the gap first needs to determine which areas are already being prioritized, which are neglected, and how the experiences of others can be shared to make future initiatives more effective.

With this in mind, ITU, IGF, UNU-CS, and Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) joined forces in 2016 to conduct research under the auspices of EQUALS to identify initiatives working towards bridging the digital gender gap. The outcome is an interactive, comprehensive Action Map which visualizes project activity around the world.

The EQUALS Action Map helps to democratize and promote information exchange around what works and what does not to close the gender digital divide, and to identify potential synergies among stakeholders in order to maximize impact. It aims to connect practitioners with one another and to bring more visibility to their work.

¹ EQUALS is a ground-breaking global network delivered by a committed partnership of corporate leaders, governments, not-for-profit organizations, academia, NGOs and communities around the world working together to bridge the gender digital divide – by bringing women to tech, and tech to women – and in so doing, bettering the lives of millions worldwide.
Information collection process

May 2016
Initial desktop research by ITU and UNU-CS;

200 projects: Findings mainly private sector

2017
Two more data partners joined (BMZ, IGF);
Expansion of database to 6 UN official languages;

600 projects with volunteer support; submissions via web form and nominations for the EQUALS in Tech Award;
Findings mostly civil society

2018
Invitation for new data partners for the EQUALS Action Map;
New round of diversified search;
Expanding to additional non-Un languages

Figure 1. Process followed to collect information for the EQUALS Action Map

What types of projects are included?

☑ Projects should address the Gender Digital Divide;
☑ Projects should have both a strong gender and digital focus or component;
☑ Projects should be part of an ongoing initiative, not just a single (one-off) event;
☑ Ideally, projects should have measurable results and resources.

What type of information is available on the map?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Type of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementer</td>
<td>Name of the stakeholder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder type</td>
<td>Civil society, private sector, government, NGO / IGO, academia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar</td>
<td>Access, Skills, Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Type of initiative implemented. The map currently contains initiatives aimed at: Training, awareness raising, capacity building, networking, mentoring, advocacy and funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headquarters</td>
<td>Country in which the organization implementing the project is based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project location</td>
<td>Country(ies) in which the project is (are) being implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short summary</td>
<td>Individual project summary of the project (300-500 words)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How are projects grouped?

The EQUALS Action Map is aligned with the three pillars of EQUALS:

1. ACCESS: Projects that aim at improving women’s and girls’ digital technology access, connectivity and security.
2. **SKILLS**: Projects that aim at supporting development of science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills for women and girls.

3. **LEADERSHIP**: Projects that aim at promoting women in decision-making roles within the ICT field.

**How to search for projects?**

1. **Interactive map**
   - Projects are presented on an interactive map where users can simply select data using the visual tool (i.e. location of headquarters, project location). *See Figure 2.*

2. **Online database**
   - Projects can be also searched by accessing the full database of projects, available at EQUALS website.

![Figure 2. Screenshot of the EQUALS Action Map](image)

**How to add your initiative?**

a) Complete the online form at the web link: [EQUALS Action Map](#);

b) Before submitting your project, we recommend that you read our detailed guideline document, available at EQUALS website for contributing to the EQUALS Action Map.

Further information: [www.equals.org](http://www.equals.org)
Contact us: [equals@itu.int](mailto:equals@itu.int)

www.equals.org