Mapping Gender Digital Inclusion Initiatives

November, 2016

UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY
Computing and **Society**

ITU

Overview

1.
Introduction

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*"The gender digital divide **is not just about ownership or access to technology**. It's not enough to give a woman a mobile phone or connect her to the internet. She also needs the **skills and confidence** to use those tools to her benefit."*

- Clare Twelvetrees

Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, United Kingdom

240+
Initiatives in the database from 50+ countries

200+
Survey responses from 80+ countries

20
In-depth interviews documenting best practices

Visualization Tool
A user-friendly platform that maps all initiatives working on gender digital inclusion

Background

The **gender digital divide** is a gender imbalance in terms of access to and participation in the digital world. Aspects of the gender digital divide include:

◎ A disparity in the **access** to the internet and to information and communication technologies (ICTs),
◎ An imbalance in terms of **ICT literacy** rates,
◎ Lower presence of women in **STEM careers** as applicants, students, faculty or management,
◎ Fewer women in the **ICT workforce**, and an even broader gap in high-level positions,
◎ More men than women participating and holding **decision-making positions** in ICT policy forums and governance bodies.

The extent of the gender digital divide is an alarming indicator of a lack of inclusiveness, undermining human development and economic efficiency.
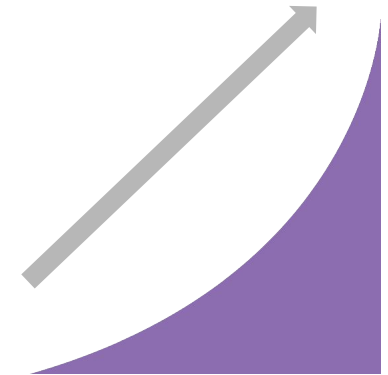
Background
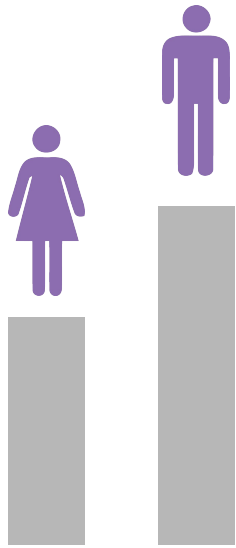
ITU estimates that there are **250M fewer women** online than men, a gap that remains largest in the world's least developed countries.
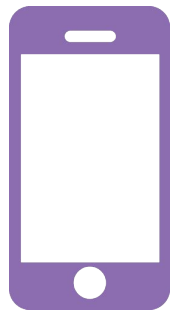
In low- and middle-income countries, **200 million fewer women** own mobile phones than men.

In 2016, the regional **gender gap is largest in Africa** (23%) and smallest in the Americas (2%) (ITU, 2016).

The overall global Internet user gender **gap increased** from 11% in 2013 to 12% in 2016 (ITU, 2016).

Computing and Society

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Background

With this scenario in mind, the **United Nations University Institute on Computing and Society (UNU-CS)** and **ITU** have been working since May 2016 on a joint research project to **identify initiatives working worldwide towards bridging the gender digital divide**. The goal of this research is to elaborate a comprehensive map of relevant stakeholders to learn from their experiences, challenges and needs. We want to know who is doing what and when, what results are being achieved, what the lessons learned are and how we can help scale up projects and efforts.

The result of this exercise will be shared through an online platform that will make available all the data we gather on organizations, their projects, focus and objectives. **The Gender Digital Inclusion Map seeks to contribute to the global community by collecting and curating critical data to enhance evidence-based interventions that can be sustainable, impactful and scalable.**

2.
Methodology

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*"It is critical to develop efforts at a **global scale**. There are many best practices that can be transferred and replicated. To do this, **partnerships are essential**"*

- Luna Doha

Bangladesh Women in Technology, Bangladesh

The Process

1. Desktop Research Database

ITU gathered information on 240+ initiatives that work on the gender digital divide. We coded the data capturing type of project, type of stakeholder and geographical location, among other variables.

2. Survey to validate data

The team designed and published a survey to validate the data from our initial desktop research and expand our database with relevant initiatives. The response rate was over 40%.

3. In-depth Interviews

20 interviews with activists and experts from different sectors and geographical locations were conducted. Interviews allowed us to document best practices and gather a deeper understanding of the challenges and obstacles these projects face.

4. Interactive Map

A user-friendly online platform was developed. It displays the information contained in the database. This visualization tool will act as a repository of projects and will be updated frequently.

5. Reports and Public Dataset

Next steps include a series of publications that will report on main findings. Additionally, ITU will make sure to share all relevant data with stakeholders and the community at large.

3.
The Database

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*"It's really important to work with women to ensure that they have the **skills and confidence** to work as entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs within companies, to become problem solvers and agents for their own careers."*

- Sophia Mahfooz

Girls in Tech, United States
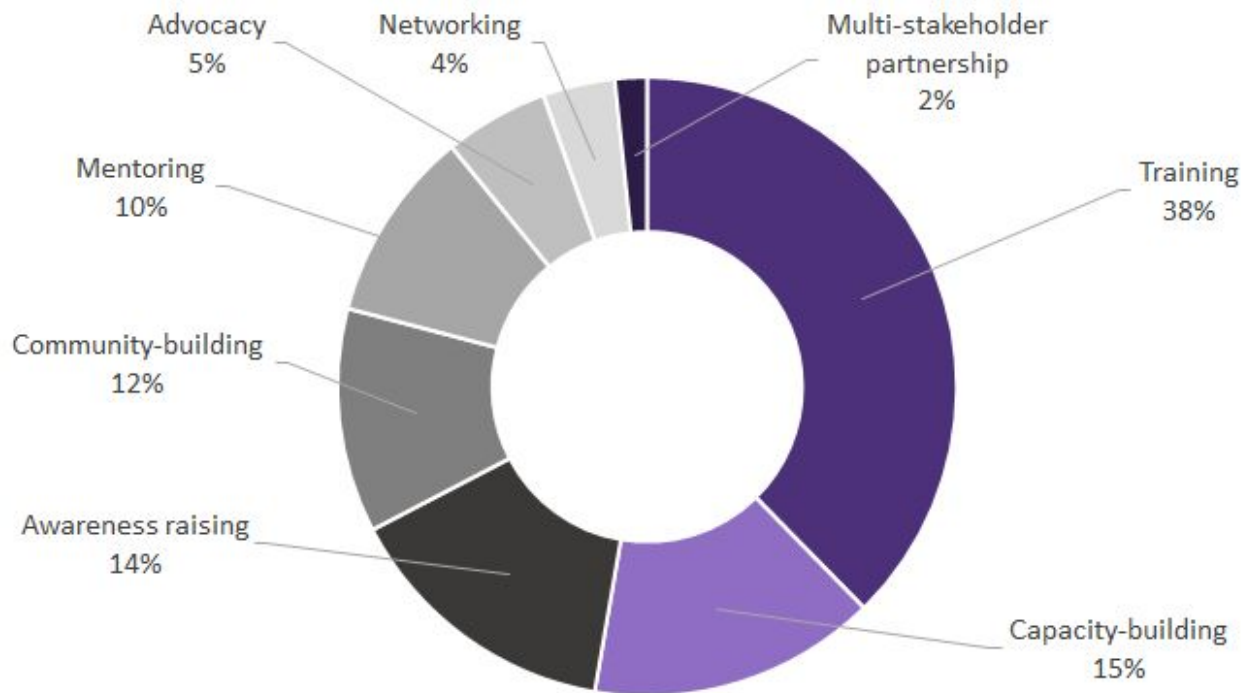
240+

Initiatives in the database

Training

Almost 40% of initiatives focus on training women in ICTs

Civil society

Is the sector with the highest level of engagement in GDD projects

Findings - Typology of Initiatives

Most initiatives aim at **training women in ICT skills**. **Capacity-building** and **awareness raising** projects are also frequent.

Findings - Pillars

When we group project categories into the **EQUALS PARTNERSHIP pillars**, findings indicate that most initiatives are working to empower women in terms of **ICT skills** and **leadership**.

Access
15%
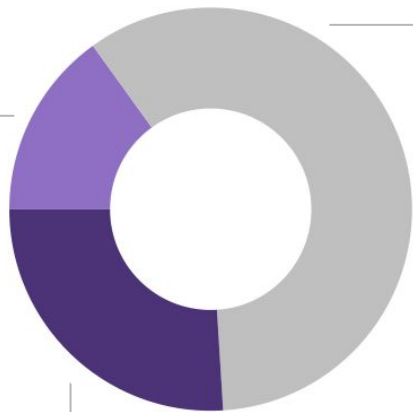
Skills
59%

Leadership
26%

EQUALS PARTNERSHIP Pillars

Skills - Empower women and girls with skills to become ICT creators

Leadership - Empower women as ICT leaders, creators, and entrepreneurs

Access - Achieve equal access to digital technologies

Findings - Initiatives' Objectives

*Initiatives that were mapped are focused mainly on **increasing the number of women studying ICT subjects and their presence within the ICT sector***

Increasing the **Recruitment**, **Retention**, and **Promotion** of Women in the **ICT Sector**
- 56%
- 44%

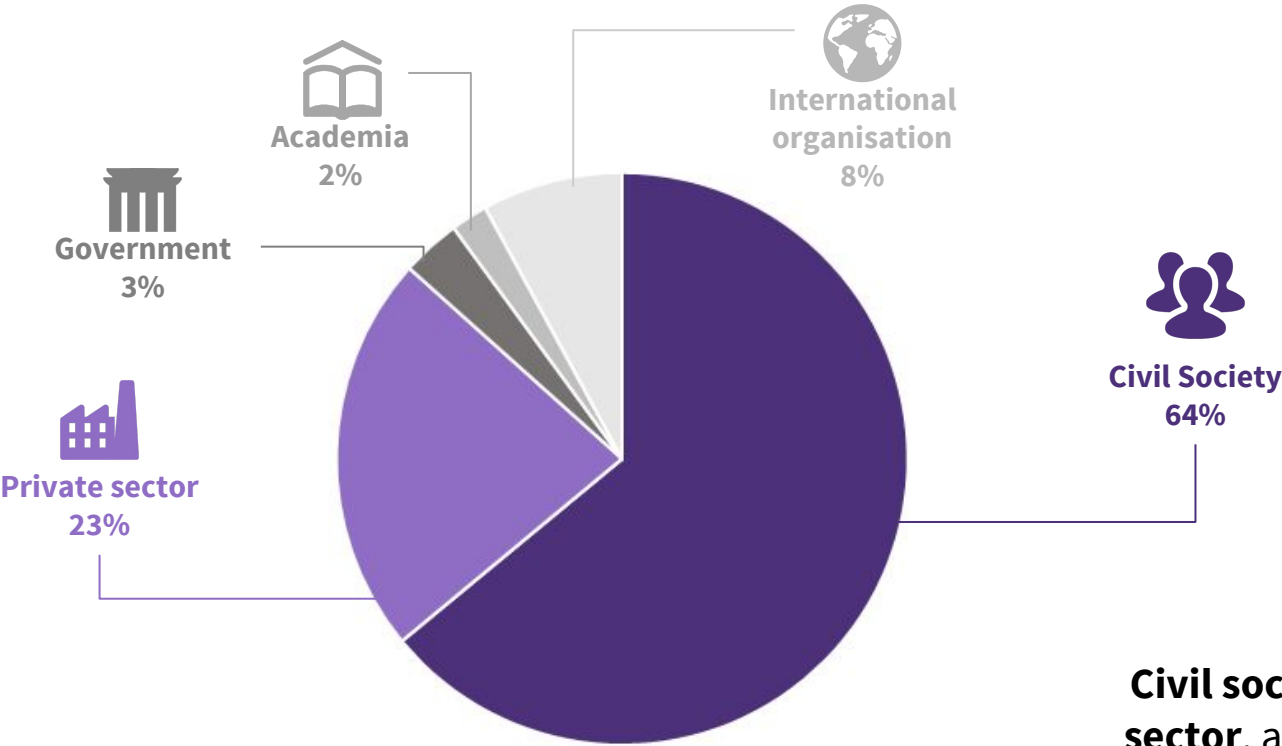Increasing Participation of Girls in **ICT Studies**
- 57%
- 43%

Ensuring **Gender Equality Online**
- 39%
- 61%

■ Initiatives that are working toward that goal

■ Initiatives that are not working toward that goal

Sample of 239 initiatives

Findings - Sector

Academia
2%

Government
3%

International
organisation
8%

Private sector
23%

Civil Society
64%

Civil society is the most active sector, accounting for 64% of all initiatives. The private sector follows with 23% of the total.
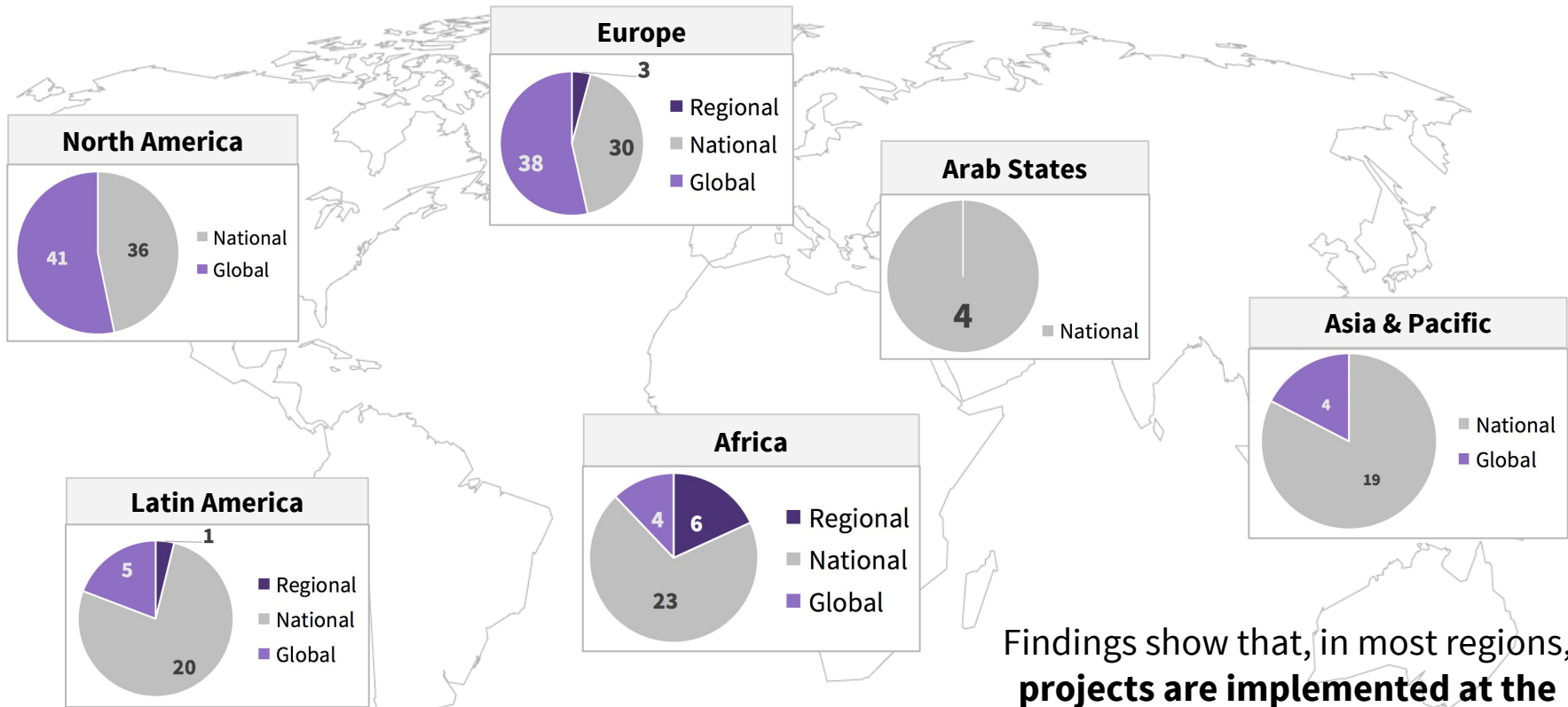
Findings - Initiatives by Region (location of headquarters)

Arab States, 2%
Global,* 2%
North America, 33%
Asia & Pacific, 10%
Latin America, 11%
Africa, 14%
Europe, 30%
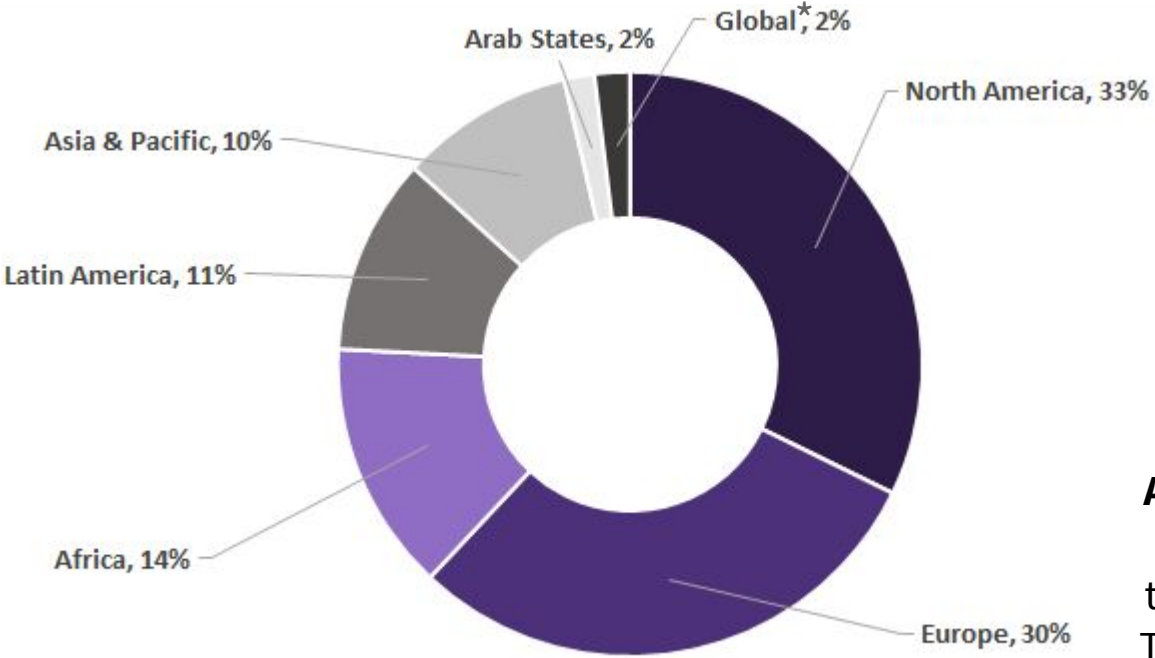
The **headquarters of most organizations are located in North America and Europe**. However, many of these organizations implement their projects in developing countries. The **Middle East and Asia account for the lowest percentage of "native" organizations**.

*Global projects are internet-based initiatives without a defined headquarter.

Findings - Scale of Initiatives by Region

North America
- National: 36
- Global: 41

Europe
- Regional: 3
- National: 30
- Global: 38

Arab States
- National: 4

Asia & Pacific
- National: 19
- Global: 4

Latin America
- Regional: 1
- National: 20
- Global: 5

Africa
- Regional: 6
- National: 23
- Global: 4

Findings show that, in most regions, **projects are implemented at the national level. Europe and North America are the only exceptions**, with most projects having global reach.

Findings - Regional Outlook

In **North America,** **"Training"** and **"Capacity-building"** projects account for **53.2%** of the total. **Civil society** is the most active sector with **48%** of initiatives, followed closely by the **private sector** (34%).

In **Europe**, **34%** of initiatives are located in the **UK** or **The Netherlands**. The region seems to be the **most diversified in terms of type of project** with **"training"** (28%), **"Awareness raising"** (21%) and **mentoring** (14%) as the leading categories.

The Middle East had the lowest amount of initiatives. There was an equal prevalence of **civil society** and **private sector** projects.

In **Latin America**, **"training"** is the most widespread type of projects (42%) but **"Community-building"** (20%) is also frequent.

In **Africa**, **"training"** is by far the preferred intervention, accounting for 63% of the total. **70%** of all African initiatives are located in three countries: **Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya.**

Asia & the Pacific shows remarkably **high engagement by civil society**, with 70% of all initiatives coming from this sector.

4.
The Survey

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*"The gender digital divide gap is too wide, **we need more female role models and ambassadors** to encourage young girls to come into the STEM field."*

- Abisoye Ajayi

GirlsCoding, Nigeria

Quick Facts Figures - The Survey

200+
Initiatives in the survey

120+
Locations around the world

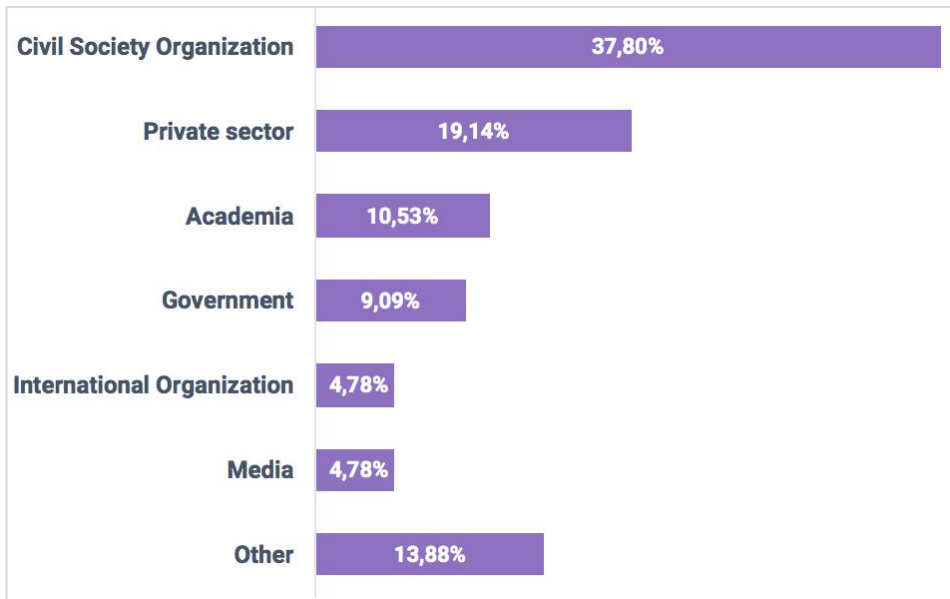**80+**
Countries

15+
Different types of organisations

Methodology

◎ The survey was sent to all the organisations we identified in the mapping exercise and participants to other ITU's initiatives.

◎ Both **quantitative and qualitative** questions were included.

◎ **Open-ended questions provided valuable insight** into organizations' challenges and expectations.

◎ **The response rate was about 40%**.

◎ Initial responses were 250+. We kept only the ones from organizations working to bridge the gender digital divide.
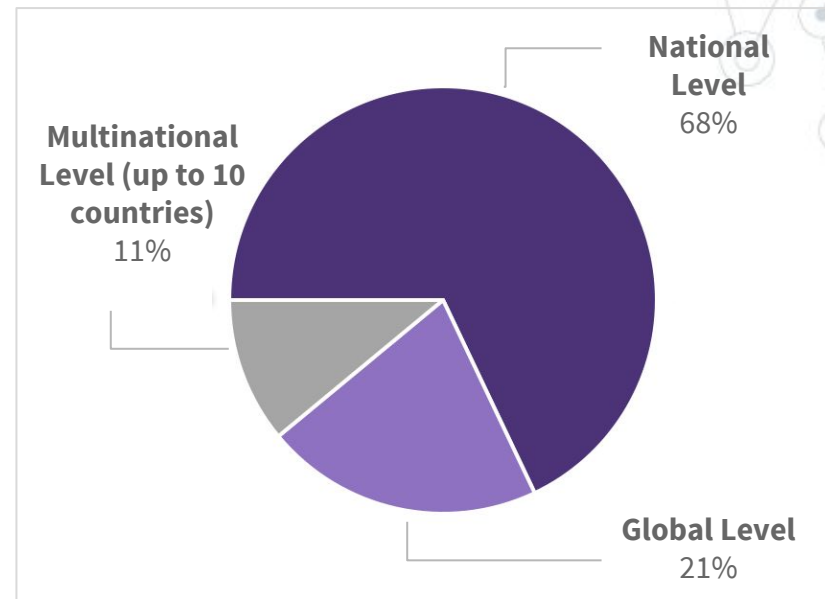
◎ **Responses after clean-up → 200**.

Want to take part in the survey? Go to this link or write us at gender@itu.int!

Findings - Sector and Location

Sector of organisations

Civil Society Organization	37,80%
Private sector	19,14%
Academia	10,53%
Government	9,09%
International Organization	4,78%
Media	4,78%
Other	13,88%

Project implementation

National Level 68%

Multinational Level (up to 10 countries) 11%

Global Level 21%

These findings confirm the insights from the desktop research where we found **civil society** to be the most engaged sector, with most projects being implemented at the **local level**.
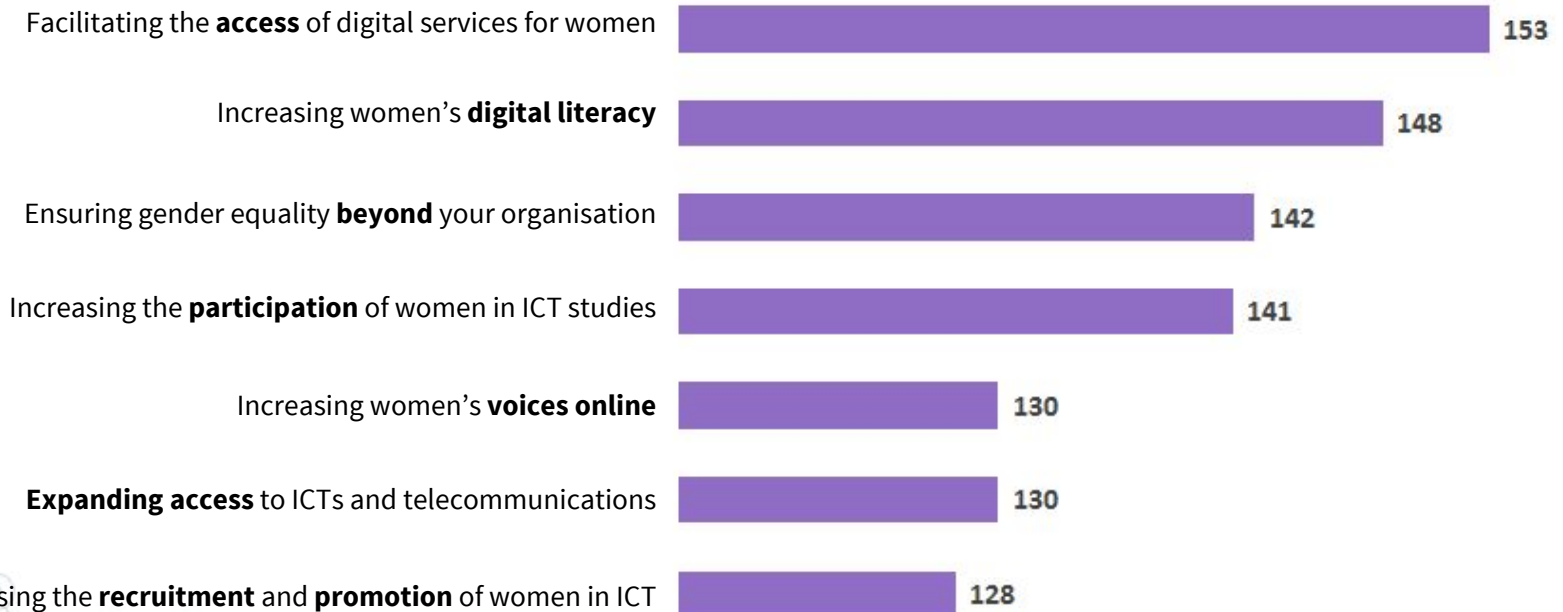
26

Findings - Initiatives' Focus

Almost 70% of all projects focus on ***awareness-raising, training, and capacity-building***. **Projects often combine several aspects**, and they are rarely narrowly exclusive.
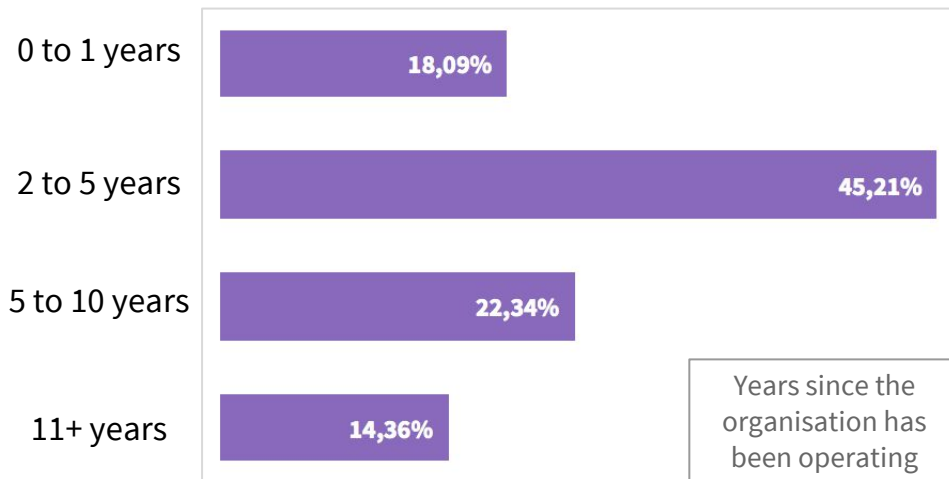
Findings - Initiatives' Goals

Projects have a wide range of goals. The main drivers behind most projects are related to ensuring **access** and **digital literacy**, and working towards **gender equality** and **participation** of women in the digital world.
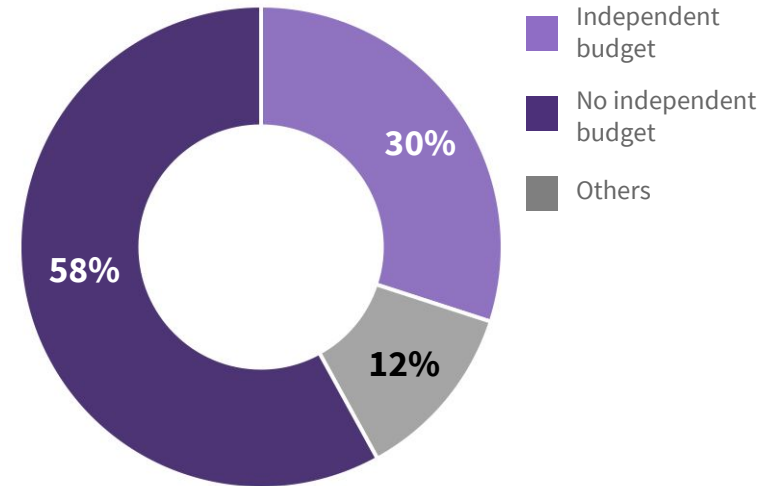
Goal	Value
Facilitating the **access** of digital services for women	153
Increasing women's **digital literacy**	148
Ensuring gender equality **beyond** your organisation	142
Increasing the **participation** of women in ICT studies	141
Increasing women's **voices online**	130
Expanding access to ICTs and telecommunications	130
Increasing the **recruitment** and **promotion** of women in ICT	128

Findings - Experience and Financial Support

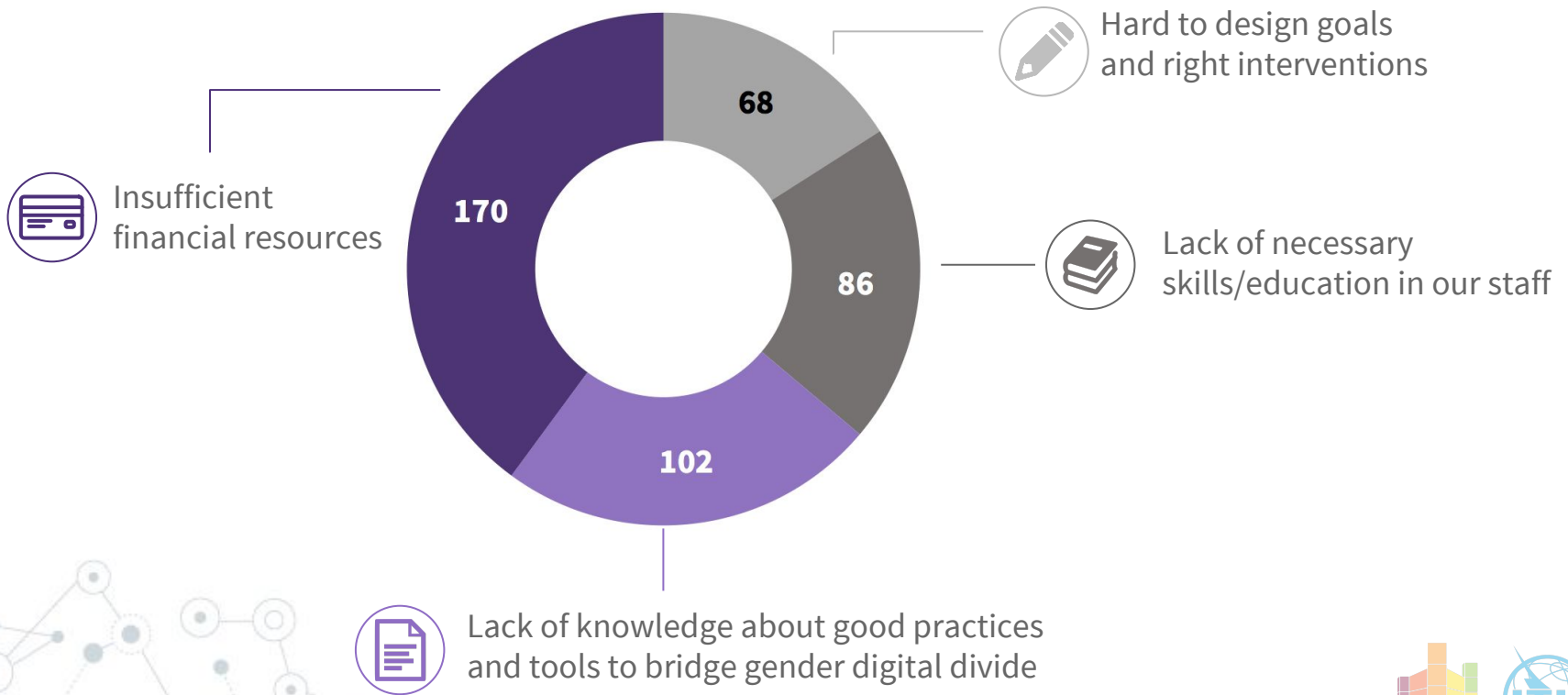**Two thirds** of initiatives have been operating for **less than 5 years.**

Only 30% of organisations have a **dedicated budget** for GDD projects.

0 to 1 years	18,09%
2 to 5 years	45,21%
5 to 10 years	22,34%
11+ years	14,36%

Years since the organisation has been operating

- Independent budget — 30%
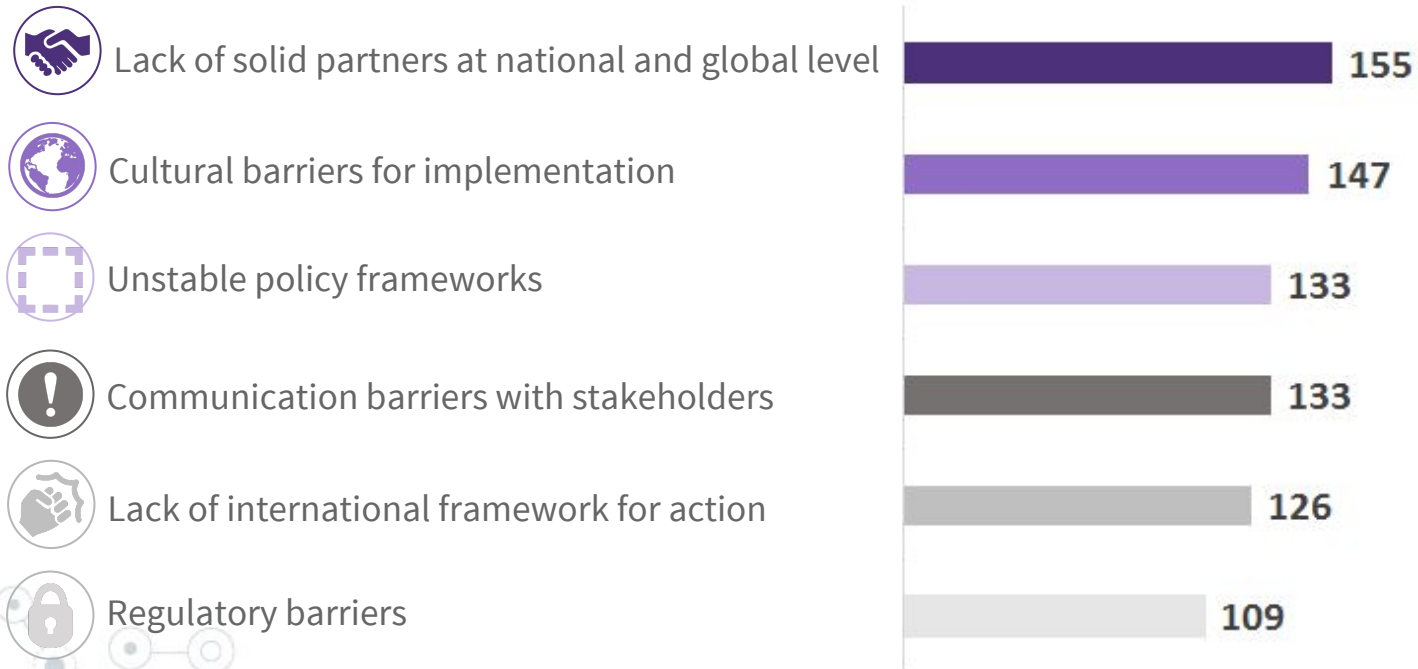- No independent budget — 58%
- Others — 12%

Findings - Internal Barriers and Obstacles

Organizations reported that the major internal barriers where the **lack of adequate and sustainable funding** and **insufficient knowledge in their teams about effective tools and good practices**.

Hard to design goals and right interventions

68

Lack of necessary skills/education in our staff

86

Insufficient financial resources

170

Lack of knowledge about good practices and tools to bridge gender digital divide

102

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Findings - External Barriers and Obstacles

External barriers refer to obstacles related to the national, regional and international context. Organizations reported the **lack of global partners** and the **existence of cultural barriers** as the major obstacles when implementing projects. When asked to explain further the obstacles, many mentioned **lack of data** and, specifically, of **statistical information broken down by gender** as a major problem for designing successful interventions.

Barrier	Value
Lack of solid partners at national and global level	155
Cultural barriers for implementation	147
Unstable policy frameworks	133
Communication barriers with stakeholders	133
Lack of international framework for action	126
Regulatory barriers	109

5.

The Interviews

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"*Work needs to start at an early age* *and from many different angles (parents, teachers, other adults, role models, etc.)"*

- Suvi Erjanti

Super-ADA, Finland
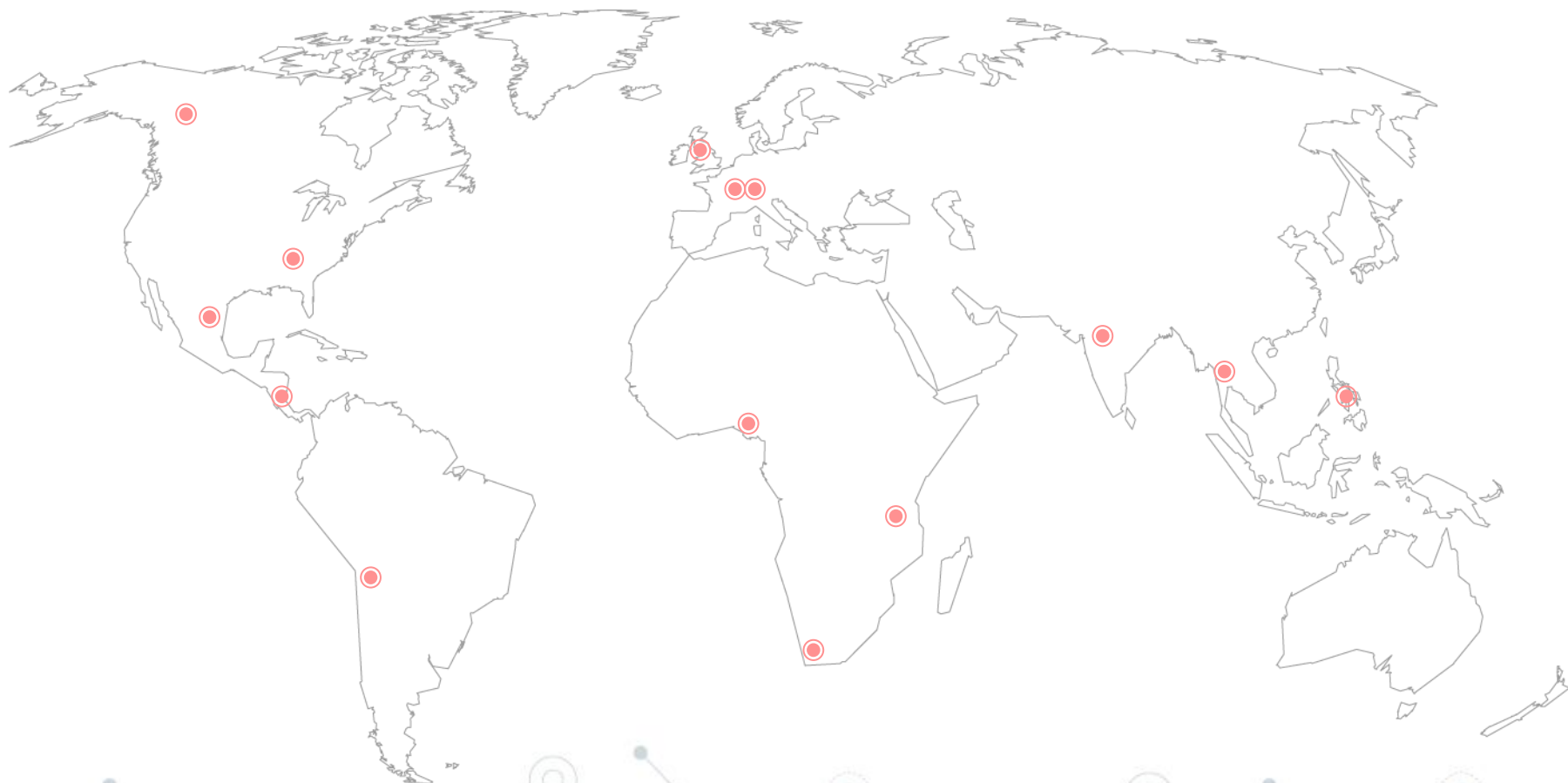
20
Interviewees in this first phase

Multi-sectorial
Interviewees come from civil society, the private sector, and international organizations
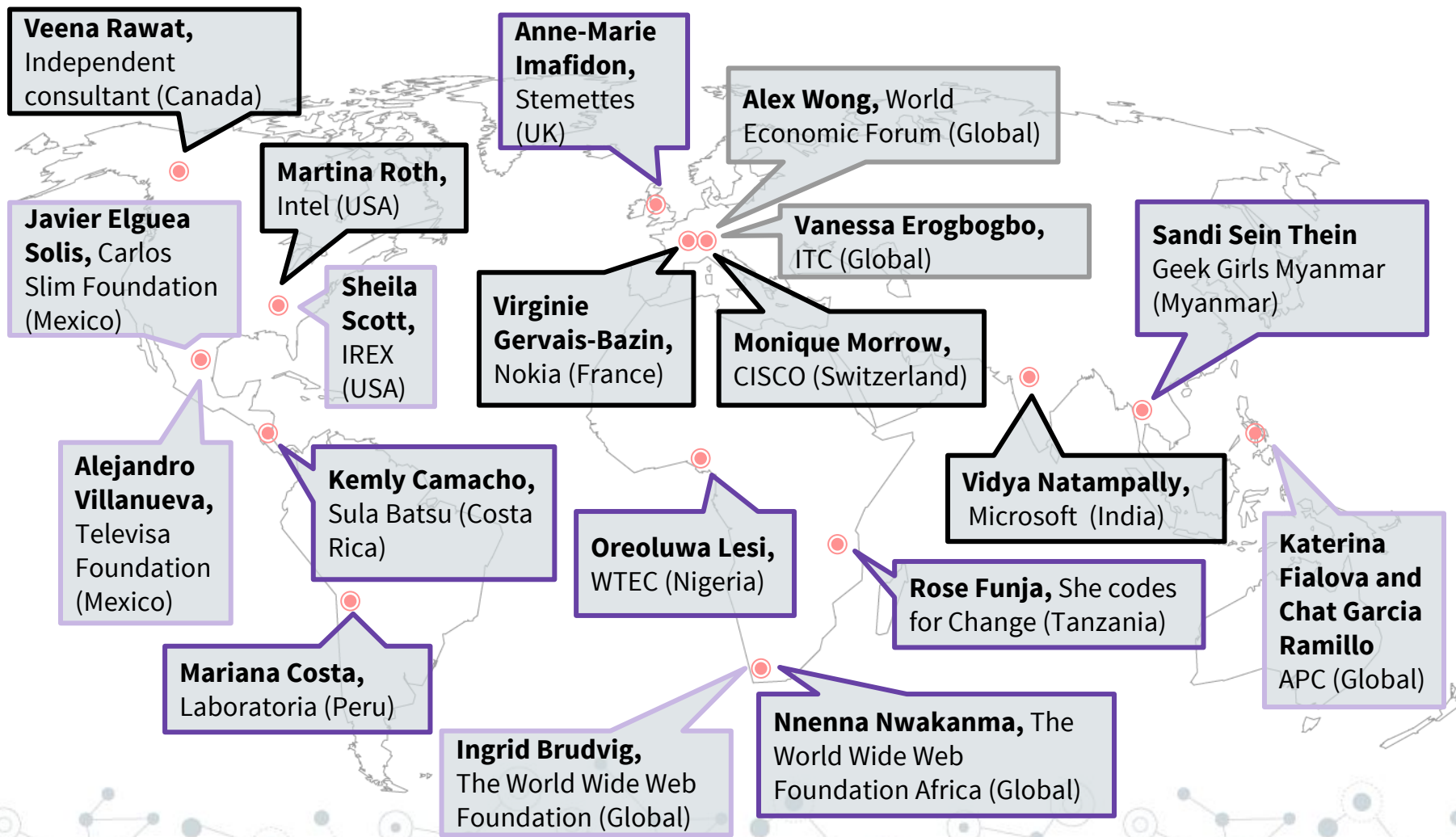
Geographical diversity
Participants were located in Canada, Nigeria, South Africa, the USA, Myanmar, Peru, Tanzania, Costa Rica, the UK, India, Mexico, France, Switzerland, Czech Republic and The Philippines

Interviewees - Locations

Interviewees

Civil Society · International Organization · Private Sector · Corporate Foundation

Veena Rawat, Independent consultant (Canada)

Anne-Marie Imafidon, Stemettes (UK)

Alex Wong, World Economic Forum (Global)

Martina Roth, Intel (USA)

Javier Elguea Solis, Carlos Slim Foundation (Mexico)

Vanessa Erogbogbo, ITC (Global)

Sandi Sein Thein Geek Girls Myanmar (Myanmar)

Sheila Scott, IREX (USA)

Virginie Gervais-Bazin, Nokia (France)

Monique Morrow, CISCO (Switzerland)

Alejandro Villanueva, Televisa Foundation (Mexico)

Kemly Camacho, Sula Batsu (Costa Rica)

Oreoluwa Lesi, WTEC (Nigeria)

Vidya Natampally, Microsoft (India)

Rose Funja, She codes for Change (Tanzania)

Katerina Fialova and Chat Garcia Ramillo APC (Global)

Mariana Costa, Laboratoria (Peru)

Ingrid Brudvig, The World Wide Web Foundation (Global)

Nnenna Nwakanma, The World Wide Web Foundation Africa (Global)

36

Findings - Challenges and Opportunities

The interviews focused on gathering rich qualitative data on the initiatives, the objectives, the main challenges and obstacles, and best practices in terms of effectiveness, sustainability and scalability.

Challenges

Lack of **funding** and overall support from donors and international actors

Difficult to engage and **retain** all the relevant stakeholders

Cultural barriers hinder women's self-perceptions

Many projects have no **long-term** approach

Often no "**gender approach**" in project design

Lack of **data** and gender-specific statistics

Findings - Challenges and Opportunities

The interviews focused on gathering rich qualitative data on the initiatives, the objectives, the main challenges and obstacles, and the best practices in terms of effectiveness, sustainability and scalability.

Opportunities/ Best practices

Projects should focus not only on access to technology but also on access to **education**, the **labour** market, and **social** participation

Women greatly value the opportunity to **learn** technical skills when given the chance

Projects need to include an **awareness-raising** component to bring down cultural barriers

Involving all actors in a given **environment** (teachers, family, local governments, businessmen)

Female **networks** at work and schools can go a long way towards empowering girls and women and to help them see themselves as future creators of technology

6.
Key Takeaways

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Combining findings from the database, the survey and the interviews

1 More than **a third of initiatives focus on training** women in ICT. **Mentoring and advocacy projects are underrepresented** despite their importance to address the issue as a whole.

2 **Civil society is leading the efforts** towards bridging the gender digital divide. We should aim at s**trengthening the engagement of private sector and, specially, of governments and academia**.

3 **Organisations** working on this issues **are mostly based in the developed world**, however **their projects are almost entirely implemented in developing countries**.

4 **Scarcity of monetary resources, absence of global frameworks of action, and lack of data** on gender digital inclusion are reported as the **main obstacles** to scale up and enhance projects.

5 Projects should have a **comprehensive approach**, **targeting girls and women but also addressing their social context as a whole.**
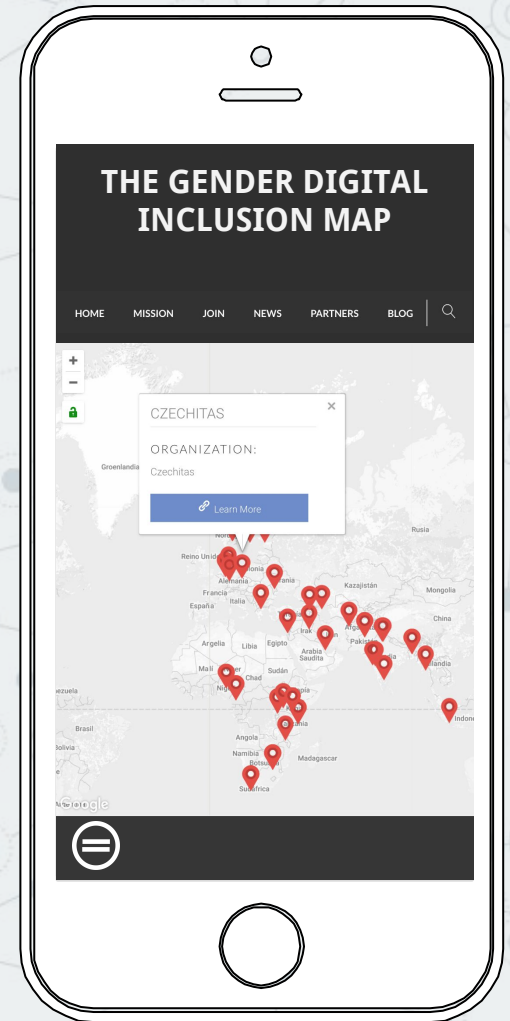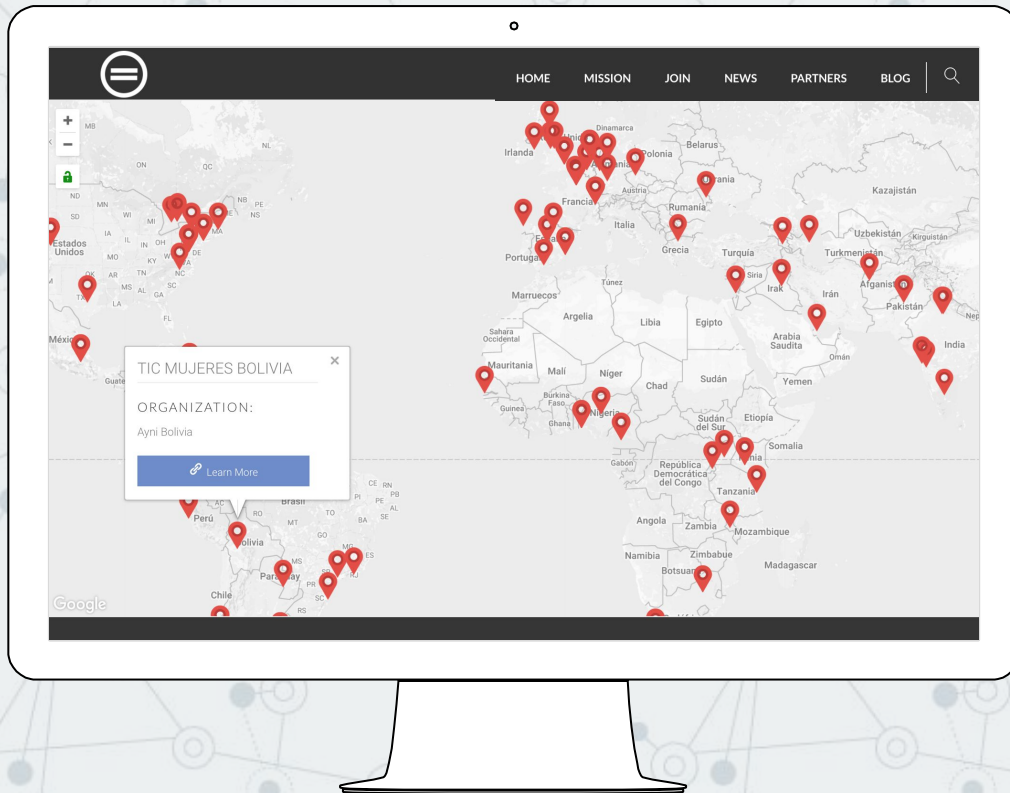
7.

The Interactive Map

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*"Effectively bridging the gap will definitely require **more partners across sectors** and new collaboration efforts around the globe"*

- Alejandro Villanueva

Televisa Foundation, Mexico

The Interactive Map

Functionalities

◎ The team is developing an online map using geocoding apps.
◎ The map is synchronized with an extensive database of initiatives that is updated frequently.
◎ It can be **embedded in any website/blog**.
◎ The current map displays **geocoded information on organisation, project (title and short description) and website**.
◎ It has a **responsive design** (can be used on different devices).
◎ **Search functions** and **submission forms** for new initiatives will be added shortly.

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8.
Next Steps

Next Steps

Q4 2016	**- Map goes public at EQUALS.org site** - Presentation at IGF 2016 - Opening platform to selected external data and content partners
Q1 2017	- ITU UNU-CS advocacy report - Call to submit new initiatives - Presentation at WEF annual meeting - Presentations at GSMA's Mobile World Congress
Q2 2017	- ITU UNU-CS academic papers - Call to submit new initiatives - Improved version of the map (search functions, new layers and submission form) - Update at WSIS
Q3 2017	- New edition of the ITU annual survey on Gender and ICTs to validate current data and gather new insights
Q4 2017	- Short publication to report new findings and progress of the project

Our goal:

1000+

Initiatives mapped by the end of 2017

EQUALS

Thank you!

To find out more about the
Gender Digital Inclusion Map
contact us at gender@itu.int
or visit equals.org

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