Session Outcome Document

EQUALS Research Report 2025: Launch & The Path Forward

EQUALS, KAIST, ITU, Women's WorldWide Web

Thursday, 10 July 2025 15:15–16:15

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/Agenda/Session/259

Key Issues discussed: Looking Beyond 2025

- Major milestone: Official launch of the EQUALS Research Report 2025, a landmark publication with 9 original chapters and 7 case studies, demonstrating global data, analysis, and providing programmatic insights on gender empowerment in the digital era.

- EQUALS 2.0 vision: Introduction of a revitalized strategy focusing on three priority domains (Social Change, Education, and Business) and the transition from coalition-based to workstream-based engagement for greater impact.

- Emerging trends and opportunities: Digital inclusion and skills development remain crucial for women and girls; the growing role of AI, digital safety, and inclusive tech ecosystems were highlighted as cross-cutting enablers.

- Persistent challenges: The gender digital divide remains significant, particularly in access to advanced digital skills, leadership positions, and equal participation in the digital economy.

- Capacity building: Introduction of the Her Digital Skills Badge Programme, designed to provide accessible training and digital literacy to women and girls globally, leveraging partnerships between EY, GSMA, ITU, and Women's WorldWide Web.

- Youth and leadership through ITU160 Gender Champions: Spotlight on the inspiring story of Daniah Reeah, ITU160 Gender Champion from Iraq, showcasing how young women leaders are fostering digital empowerment in their communities and serving as role models in the WSIS process.

- Global cooperation: Session underlined the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration between academia, private sector, civil society, and international organizations to sustain the WSIS vision beyond 2025.

Tangible Outcomes of the session

- key achievements

  - Broad dissemination of fresh research insights, including success stories and data-backed strategies for advancing gender equality in digital policy and practice.

- Demonstrated the expanded scope and ambition of EQUALS *2.0* for coordinated, impactful gender and digital inclusion initiatives.

- Visibility for the ITU160 Gender Champions initiative, with a Champion's voice integrated in the programme to inspire and mobilize stakeholders.

● announcements/launch during the session

- Successful public launch of the EQUALS Research Report 2025.

- Announcement and preview of the Her Digital Skills Badge Programme (to be officially launched later in 2025) offering a pathway for women and girls to earn recognized digital skills credentials.

- Public introduction of EQUALS' renewed workstream model under EQUALS 2.0.

● agreements/commitments as an outcome of the session

- Pledge to integrate findings and recommendations from the EQUALS Research Report 2025 into policy dialogues and WSIS+20 review processes.

- Commitment by EQUALS partners and session participants to collaborate on scaling the Her Digital Skills Badge Programme globally.

- Continued engagement of ITU160 Gender Champions in WSIS activities as youth ambassadors for digital inclusion and gender equality.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Action Plan for the WSIS+20 Review and Beyond

● Integrate gender equality as a central pillar in the WSIS+20 vision, ensuring all digital transformation strategies explicitly address the gender digital divide in access, skills, leadership, and safety.

● Scale capacity-building models like the Her Digital Skills Badge Programme through public-private partnerships, targeting underserved communities, especially in developing regions.

● Embed youth and women's leadership (including ITU160 Gender Champions) in the governance and implementation of WSIS-related initiatives to ensure inclusive, future-ready digital ecosystems.

● Invest in longitudinal research and data collection to track gender-related progress in ICTs beyond 2025, enabling evidence-based decision-making.

● Strengthen multi-stakeholder cooperation to co-create innovative solutions that address both emerging tech opportunities (e.g., AI, green tech) and structural challenges to women's participation in the digital economy.