



© Future Forum

Core Donor



In Partnership With



secdev.foundation



# The World We Want

Edited by

OU VIRAK LAURA BECKWITH MICHAEL RENFREW

# Chapter 3 | Bridging Gender Digital Divide: A Path to an Inclusive Digital Economy in Cambodia

# **Keomuda VANLY**

#### **Future Scenario**

In a small village located in a remote province in Cambodia, Chenda is sitting in her humble home taking care of her family business. Chenda's business is different from most traditional small businesses' operations. Instead of writing down her orders on paper, keeping a book record, and doing paper-based inventories, Chenda is scrolling through her phone to catch up with the real-time orders being placed, while tracking her products' delivery to her customers. Running a small business at home has become easier now that her business has been digitalized. Digitalization removes the geographical barrier, allowing her to have bigger market access and to conveniently accept online money transfers without having to go to the nearest money transfer agency. On top of that, Chenda is also taking an online course on how to integrate her small business directly into the global value chain without the need to participate through multinational companies.

Still impressed by how the internet and digital technologies have been able to change her business, Chenda sees that her sister is hurrying back from school to tell her about today's lesson on digital literacy. According to her sister, digital literacy has now been embedded in the school curriculum starting from primary school. Not only was her sister taught about the importance of having access to the internet and the proper attitude that one should have when interacting on social media, but her sister was also taught in-depth on the different experiences of men and women when it comes to internet usage.

Hearing her sister talk enthusiastically about her digital literacy class and seeing her business today, Chenda could not help but reflect on how much has changed since 2020 and all the possibilities that have opened up since she first got access to the internet. During the global pandemic of Covid-19, when face-to-face interaction was almost impossible, everything started to be digitalized and go online. For other people, switching to an online platform seemed simple; unfortunately, Chenda did not have the same privilege. It was not only because she was living in one of the most remote areas of the country, making online connectivity a challenge, but also because she did not have adequate knowledge of how to adapt to digitalization. The online world felt uncomfortable and unfamiliar, as the content online did not fit her interests and needs; this discouraged her from going online. Luckily, 2021 was a breakthrough year. The gender digital

divide started to gain attention after Cambodia began to try to find solutions for how to bridge the digital divide and promote inclusive usage of the internet as a part of the country's transformation towards the digital economy. While implementing the Digital Economic and Society Framework (2021-2035), Cambodia started to collect gender-disaggregated data on internet usage and integrate information and communication technologies (ICTs) in its school curriculum (in both formal and vocational education) with the aim of developing digital literacy and confidence in its young citizens. The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) cooperated with mobile phone operators to expand the availability of internet broadband and offer an affordable price for internet usage, as well as working with civil society to launch campaigns to change attitudes about internet usage. The campaigns include creating a positive perception among women and girls regarding the use of the internet as well as raising public awareness of the barriers that hinder women and girls from going online. Thanks to these initiatives, Cambodia started to narrow the gender digital divide, and develop digital literacy and a positive digital attitude amongst its citizens.

Taking advantage of all of the transformations, Chenda maximized her opportunity by actively participating in the digital literacy training that was provided in her village as part of the Cambodian government's campaign to transform Cambodia's citizens into digital citizens. Now in 2035, Chenda feels more comfortable online and is able to find the information needed for her business and herself, while proudly witnessing her sister getting better knowledge in digital literacy. Thinking back to all the changes, Chenda is thankful that she and her sister, as women, were not left behind in Cambodia's digital transformation, but instead the process has taken into account the barriers that she faced as a woman trying to adapt to a new digital age.

# Introduction: Narrowing the gender digital divide in Cambodia

Chenda's story provides a good example of the social and economic opportunities that ICTs such as digital networks and platforms, mobile phones, internet services, and fixed broadband can provide to an economy. Such opportunities are recognized by Cambodia and the RGC aims to transform Cambodia into a digital economy by 2035 in order to achieve the vision of being a middle-income country by 2030 and a high-income economy by 2050 (Supreme National Economic Council, 2021).

While digital technologies are playing an integral part in the development of Cambodia's digital economy, Chenda's story also shows that the benefits of the technological transformation have not been distributed equally amongst social groups. One of the groups being left behind is women who are facing social constraints, ranging from the lack of digital knowledge to societal norms, which hinder them from having access and being able to meaningfully enjoy the benefits that ICTs have to offer. While internet usage and coverage increased twofold between 2015 and 2020, the

gender digital divide persists. In 2019, 48 percent of women worldwide were using the internet compared to 58 percent of their male counterparts, representing a gender gap of 17 percent (ITU, 2020; Picot and Spath, 2020). Likewise in Cambodia, data from 2018 showed that there was a 20 percent gap between men and women in terms of mobile phone ownership (male: 78%, female: 62%) and around 34 percent gap in internet usage (male: 45%, female: 30%) (LIRNEasia, 2018). With such a gap in access and use of digital technologies and the internet, the gender digital divide has been recognized as one of the barriers to achieving gender equality and might potentially exacerbate existing gender inequality. For this reason, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has also included narrowing the gender digital divide in target 5B of SDG goal 5: Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment <sup>1</sup> (United Nations, 2021, p. 5).

As the RGC is working on transforming Cambodia into a digital economy, narrowing the gender digital divide in the country should be promoted so that Cambodian women and girls can enjoy the benefits that digital technologies have to offer, as reflected in Chenda's story. Therefore, this paper will assess the gender digital divide in Cambodia and outline possible policy solutions to narrow the gender digital divide in the country, thus contributing to Cambodia's transformation to an inclusive digital economy.

# **Context Analysis**

# **Gender Digital Divide: the definition**

The notion of gender digital divide is still relatively new and goes against the prevailing view that digital technologies, such as ICTs, are "neutral and rigid." That is, ICT tools are commonly viewed to be "socially-neutral, useful, and can be used regardless of the social, economic, and political contexts" (Stamp, 1989 as cited in Huyer and Sikoska, 2003, p.16). If ICTs are considered gender-neutral, it is naturally assumed that women were able to benefit equally from them. Such a belief, however, overlooks the social context that digital technologies are operating in; the ability to utilize and benefit from ICTs is constrained by the socio-cultural context (UNESCAP, n.d.; Huyer and Sikoska, 2003).

In spite of the continuing debate, the gender digital divide is commonly defined (in binary terms), as the gap between women and men in access to ICT (Picot and Spath, 2020). The discussion of ICT access has evolved beyond looking at the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' to a more complex discussion of access that takes into account the basis of psychological, material, skills, and usage factors (UNESCAP, n.d.; Antonio and Tuffley, 2014). For this reason, the gender digital divide can be better understood as "inequalities between women and men in terms of digital technology

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Target 5.B: "Enhancing the use of enabling technology in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women"

and use" (USAID, 2020, p. 4). By taking into account the technology and social context of access to ICT, Liff and Shepherd (2004) have identified four types of access that affects the gender divide: technical access, ability to use access, take-up of access, and impact of access, as described in the Box 1 below:

# Box 1. Key dimensions of Internet access affecting gender divides

- Technical access: where men and women can and do get access to an Internet-ready device; the type of device involved; and the quality of the connectivity.
- Ability to use access: the extent to which men and women know other people who use
  the Internet and can provide help; the skill levels they perceive they have reached;
  their comfort/discomfort with ICT-based systems; and worries about potential negative
  consequences of access (e.g. fraud or viruses).
- Take-up of access: whether men and women are Internet users; any variation in length
  of use; how much use they make of access; and what range of activities they use it for.
- Impact of access: the degree to which Internet use has changed patterns of activities; any views as to the significance of this, in this context focusing on the extent to which access is being used in ways that challenge or reinforce gender stereotypical behaviour.

Source: Liff and Shepherd, 2004

#### **Gender Digital Divide in Cambodia**

There are few to no studies that directly address the topic of the gender digital divide in Cambodia. The existing discussions on the topic can be found in studies related to the gender digital divide in developing countries more broadly or as part of the discussion of the digital divide in Cambodia in general. The lack of studies on the gender digital divide in Cambodia contributes to an incomplete understanding of the challenges that Cambodian women face when adopting and adapting to digital technologies. This could potentially exacerbate the existing gender inequalities in the country, especially as Cambodia is moving towards a digital economy.

# **Evidence of gender digital divide in Cambodia**

The gender digital divide in Cambodia, due to limited data, could be summarized as the result of the issues related to technical access and the ability to use access based on the framework by Liff and Shepherd (2004). In terms of technical access, in 2019, the number of internets and mobile phone subscriptions in Cambodia has increased to 84 percent internet subscriptions and 177 percent mobile subscriptions. However, as mentioned above, the 2018 survey showed that there remained a 20 percent gap and 34 percent gap between women and men in mobile phone ownership and internet usage respectively (LIRNEasia, 2018; Kong, 2019). On top of that, a 2016

study on 2,000 Cambodian participants also found out that men are more likely than women to use the internet on their phones with 42 percent of men, while only 24 percent of women responded that they used or had used the internet on their phones (Phong et al., 2016). The survey by LIRNEasia (2018) found that the main reason for Cambodian people not using the internet is that they do not know how to use it (41% of the sample population) as well as that they do not have access to the internet devices like computers and smartphones (23% of the sample population). Even though the survey did not disaggregate between women and men on the reason for not using the internet, various studies have shown that digital literacy is one of the main barriers for women to adopt digital technologies (Picot and Spath, 2020). To begin with, in terms of acquiring ICT skills through general or formal education, Cambodian women and girls tend to be at the disadvantage, as they tend to have high dropout rates in secondary and high school, while the ICT curriculum in Cambodia starts at high school level in grade 11 and 12. This means that girls are missing out on receiving ICT training as well as STEM education that is required for them to acquire ICT skills. Other barriers that hinder women from acquiring ICT skills include the time availability issue of women due to their role in engaging in unpaid domestic works and the lack of gender-sensitive ICT content (UNDP, 2020; Touch, 2018). Moreover, women tend to have less interest in ICT, as digital technology has been gender-stereotyped as a male domain; therefore, women are not encouraged by their parents and surroundings to pursue ICT skills (Marsan and Sey, 2021; Touch, 2018). For women that have access to the internet and online platform, online crimes such as online harassment and online gender-based violence also serve as a barrier that limits women's online participation and prevent women from practicing their ICT skills (Touch, 2018). LIRNEasia (2018) found that 29 percent of female Cambodian internet users (aged 15-65) have experienced online harassment compared to 23 percent of their male counterparts, mostly in the form of being cyberstalked. Of the Cambodian women that have experienced online harassment, 11 percent reported reducing the usage of the particular website, while 7 percent deleted the application.

# Bridging gender digital divide: why it matters?

As Cambodia is moving towards a digital economy, ICTs and digital technologies will become more integrated into our society and economic development. Therefore, bridging the gender digital divide will provide opportunities for women to be included in the socio-economic development of Cambodia, thus improving the economic development of Cambodia as a whole. A report by Plan International (2018) suggested that global GDP would rise between 13 - 18 billion USD if an additional 600 million women are connected to the internet in 3 years (p. 6).

Secondly, as the economy has become more digitalized, equipping women with the necessary resources and skills to adapt to the new digital economy would improve their financial inclusion and employment opportunities, thus contributing to women's economic autonomy. In terms of

financial inclusion, having adequate digital skills and access would allow women to better access financial services that are increasingly digitalized (Sorgner et al., 2018 as cited in Picot and Spath, 2020). Currently, women in developing countries like Cambodia are less likely than men to have a bank account and therefore less likely to have access to mobile banking. This hinders their ability to manage their finances and fully engage in economic activities (OECD, 2018).

In terms of employment opportunities, better digital inclusion will allow women to successfully navigate the labor market and improve their ability to find employment opportunities that match their skill set. Furthermore, digital technologies can also help Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to expand and reach a wider range of customers; while reducing the cost of expensive marketing and sales expenditures (OECD, 2018; Touch, 2018). Amongst all the MSMEs in Cambodia, women are estimated to own and manage around 61 percent; however, most women-owned MSMEs tend to be micro and unregistered (less than 2% of women-owned businesses obtain registration) (Pact, 2019). For this reason, bridging the gender digital gap will offer women entrepreneurs opportunities to leapfrog to more advanced technologies as well as bringing their businesses from the informal to formal economy.

# ICT and gender mainstreaming policies in Cambodia

Promoting gender equality and enhancing women's participation in all sectors has long been on the agenda of the RGC. Therefore, as Cambodia is moving towards a digital economy, the discussion on women's participation in the digitalization process has also emerged in policy papers, especially in the long term policy framework, the Digital Economy and Society Framework (2021-2035) and the 5th Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan, Neary Rattanak V (NR5) (2019-2023) of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA). The Digital Economy and Society Framework has mentioned the need to create programs to support women's participation in the digital sector as one of the policy measures to mitigate the challenges in Cambodia's digital transformation (SNEC, 2021, p.94). At the same time, NR5 also mentions the need for the development of the professional skills of women to be in line with the needs of a digital economy as one of the objectives of the strategy for women's economic empowerment (MoWA, 2021, p.27). On paper, the acknowledgement of support for women's participation in Cambodia's digital transformation shows that Cambodia recognizes the barriers that women face when adopting new digital technologies. It further reflects Cambodia's political will in promoting an inclusive digital economy. Even so, the discussion of support for women's digital adoption in the two policy frameworks only focuses on reskilling women through vocational training. The policy frameworks do not mention the means to address other barriers that women might face in digital adoption such as online gender-based violence and other aspects of digital literacy such as digital ethics and digital safety.

Yet, the main concern in narrowing the gender digital divide lies in the operation and implementation of the policy papers. The operation/implementation gap has long been the main shortcoming of Cambodia's gender mainstreaming strategy (MoWA, 2014a). The top two challenges in implementation are the limited alignment between line ministries and key activities set in Neary Rattanak, and the gender budget constraint. Firstly, the implementation of the Neary Rattanak Strategic Plan relies on the implementation and monitoring of the line ministries; therefore, respective line ministries need to regularly establish their Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans (GMAPs) implemented by the Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs) in the line ministries (JICA, 2018). However, the GMAPs tend not to link to the overall strategic plans of the line ministries. Furthermore, the line ministries also have limited capacity to implement their respective GMAPs as well as having a low commitment to implementing the GMAPs due to the perception that gender equality is the work and responsibility of MoWA (USAID, 2016). Secondly, it has also been reported that there has been a limited budget to implement gender-related plans and activities, posing a challenge for gender mainstreaming activities in Cambodia (USAID, 2016; MoWA, 2014b). Because of the challenges in implementation, women and girls could potentially be left out of Cambodia's digital transformation. For this reason, a practical commitment is required for bridging the gender digital divide in the country.

# **Policy Recommendations**

Building a digital economy is part of Cambodia's plan to become a middle-income country by 2030 and a high-income economy by 2050. However, for Cambodia to be on the right path for inclusive digital economic development, the country must build a strong digital foundation that allows both women and men to be included and be able to contribute to the country's digitalization process. The following recommendations provide solutions to bridge the gender digital divide in Cambodia. All the recommendations would require close cooperation and commitment from all relevant stakeholders, including the government, NGOs/civil society, and private sector actors.

#### Collecting gender-disaggregated data and gender-specific indicators on ICT

Having adequate data plays a very important role for policymakers to get a more accurate understanding of the gender digital divide in Cambodia in order to include gender issues in ICT policies, plans, and strategies. However, there is still a lack of gender-disaggregated data and gender-specific indicators to assess women's involvement in digital technology in Cambodia. This requires policymakers to cooperate with civil society organizations, especially women's rights organizations, and private sector actors, such as mobile operators and internet service providers, to develop a better data collection strategy that is disaggregated by gender.

The existing data focuses on some of the barriers that women face that hinder them from using ICT such as the education attainment rate, time constraints, and socio-cultural barriers, while the data collected on internet users and mobile phone ownership tends to be reported at the household level. Although the data is useful, it is not enough to construct gender-related indicators and to monitor and evaluate gender-related issues in ICT policies. UNESCAP (n.d.) recommends that gender statistics on ICT should be collected at an individual level; that is, collected directly from women and girls rather than their family members. In addition, the data collected should include qualitative and quantitative data on the differing patterns of access and use of ICTs for men and women. Policymakers can refer to existing toolkits like GSMA's "Toolkit for Researching Women's Internet Access and Use" to help craft gender indicators along with the "UN Minimum Set of Gender Indicators" (GSMA, 2018; Sey and Hafkin, 2019). Because individuallevel micro-data needs to be collected from women themselves regarding their ICT experience, big data<sup>2</sup> collection and analytics plays a very important role in collecting the data needed for the gender digital divide in Cambodia. Access to big data will allows policymakers to track longitudinal change and understand the pattern of access and online behavior (UNICEF, n.d.). Furthermore, private sector actors like mobile phone operators and internet service providers should be involved in recording detailed data related to their customers, disaggregated by gender. This may include ownership of devices, the amount of time spent online as well as the type of activities that woman and men do online. The data collection should be done anonymously in order to protect the users' privacy.

Gender-disaggregated data should be used to update the existing Digital Economy Policy Framework and Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and could be shared with the Supreme National Economic Council (SNEC)<sup>3</sup> and line ministries, on a quarterly basis to provide an up-to-date picture of the gender digital divide in Cambodia. The utilization and sharing of data amongst stakeholders should be done in a secure manner with consideration for data protection and privacy requirements (OECD, 2018). Civil society organizations can play an important role in monitoring the usage of the data collected and ensuring that gender-disaggregated data would contribute to measures that address the gender digital divide in Cambodia.

# Improving gender mainstreaming strategy and implementation

At the policy level, RGC should continue prioritizing gender mainstreaming in Cambodia's economic development, with close cooperation between MoWA and line ministries such as the

<sup>2</sup> Big data is defined as "large volumes of high velocity, complex, and variable data that require advanced techniques and technologies to enable the capture, storage, distribution, management and analysis of the information." (UN Women, 2018)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> SNEC is "the highest-level government body mandated to provide the Prime Minister with recommendations regarding policies and strategies for socioeconomic development" (ADB, 2013). The body is responsible for the coordination and establishment of the Digital Economy and Policy Framework.

Ministry of Economic and Finance, Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, and Ministry of Post and Telecommunication (SNEC, 2021). In order for the gender-mainstreaming strategy to be implemented effectively, first, the GMAGs in each respective line ministry should be involved in their respective strategic plan in order to monitor that the plan is drafted with gender sensitivity and responsiveness. Furthermore, the GMAPs should be linked with the overall strategic plan of the line ministries or serve as an extension to the overall strategic plan. It is also essential to ensure that sufficient gender budgeting is allocated to implement the activities in GMAPs of each line ministry. In addition to mainstreaming gender at the level of the strategic plan, gendered indicators should also be developed in the monitoring and evaluation plans to track the effectiveness of implementation. The monitoring of the plan's implementation involves close coordination among stakeholders, including the government and non-state actors such as the development partners and civil society. Second, in order to ensure effective implementation and monitoring of GMAPs in line ministries, the GMAGs and officials should be equipped with adequate capacity to conduct gender analysis and advocacy. This requires internal training for officials on gender-sensitive project planning and implementation.

# Promoting ICT skills and digital literacy for women

One of the main barriers for women to access ICT is their lack of digital skills and literacy; therefore, women's skills development in ICT should be integrated into formal education, through capacity development training, and public campaigns.

#### Incorporating digital literacy in formal education

In the formal education system, the government of Cambodia should introduce digital literacy in the school curriculum from the primary school level, which has the highest enrolment rate of both girls and boys. This will enable female students to be familiar with ICTs from a young age, as well as online ethical behavior and safety. An early introduction to ICT will help them to identify if they are interested in tech-related fields. The government should expand the existing STEM programs like the New Generation School and E2STEM to the primary and secondary levels as well.

Additionally, for ICT-related education to be successful, the government should ensure adequate digital equipment in the classroom and a sound and relevant ICT curriculum is set in place. The UNDP Assessment report (2020) suggests that the content of the ICT curriculum that is currently introduced in grades 11 and 12 is out of date and lacking "a clear and logical coherence" (p.37). Furthermore, the current curriculum only introduces high school students to open-source software programs like Openoffice and the Ubuntu Linux operating system that might cause a challenge for students when they try to adapt to the Microsoft ecosystem dominant in the ICT market. For this reason, the government should consider revising the current curriculum to be

up to date by working closely with international donors, I(N)GOs and civil society partners to develop and revise the digital education curriculum as well as acquiring relevant digital tools and software for formal digital education. On top of ICT skills, digital literacy education should also be developed with a focus on digital citizenship. The curriculum should include digital ethics, promoting understanding of digital safety, and increasing understanding of the differences between men and women regarding their online experience.

# Incorporating digital literacy through capacity development training for women

Besides developing digital literacy through formal education, women in the labor market can also develop their ICT skills through capacity development training. The capacity development training, similar to the formal education curriculum, should focus on information literacy, digital skills, critical thinking, and complex problem-solving skills. Such training could be conducted through a home-based government program at the sub-national level with the cooperation of development partners, local NGOs, the private sector, and women-owned business associations to upskill the current workforce.

In addition to organizing training at the local level, developing ICT skills and digital literacy for women could also be done through Women Development Centers (WDCs) at the local level. There are 14 WDCs under the management of MoWA in Cambodia, located in different provinces in the country that provide training to women on vocational skills such as financial literacy, small business management, sewing/tailoring and beautician skills (MoWA, 2019). Annually, the 14 WDCs provide vocational training to around 3,000 women; therefore, incorporating digital literacy in the curriculum of WDCs would allow Cambodia to reach out to more women and equip them with better digital literacy, thus preparing them to become digital citizens (MoWA, 2021). One of the challenges that WDCs face, however, is regarding their structure and budget, which does not allow WDCs to move beyond providing vocational training (MoWA, 2019; Vanly, 2020). For this reason, an adequate budget allocation from MoWA with the support of development partners is needed in order for digital literacy and ICT skills to be incorporated into the WDCs' training curriculum.

# Conducting an awareness-raising campaign regarding women owning and accessing mobile phones and the internet

Bridging the gender digital divide in Cambodia requires the public to contribute to providing a safe online space for women. For this reason, it is very important for the government, with the support of civil society such as women's rights organizations, to organize awareness-raising campaigns about the gender digital divide. The campaign should be conducted with the objective to promote social and behavioral change in order to change gender stereotypes surrounding technology and ICT tools in Cambodia. The campaign should focus on raising awareness of the

barriers that women and girls face that hinder them from accessing mobile phones and the internet as well as promoting ethical online behavior that aims to mitigate online gender-based violence and harassment. The campaign should also encourage women, girls, and their family members to feel comfortable with ICT. The campaign should also provide tips and solutions for how the public can contribute to narrowing the gender digital divide in Cambodia such as how to be mindful online and information related to reporting platforms and hotlines to contact when the public witnesses online gender-based violence. The campaign can be done at the local level and through an online campaign. Sub-national institutions like the Women and Children's Consultative Committees (WCCCs), Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWCs), and Women and Children Focal Point (WCFP) should be tasked with promoting awareness of the gender digital divide at the local level due to their close association with local communities.

# **Providing inclusive service**

Besides collecting gender-disaggregated data of their consumers, private sector actors like mobile phone operators and internet service providers can help to bridge the gender digital divide by providing affordable choices for internet service and mobile phones for women, especially for women with low incomes in order to promote physical accessibility. Furthermore, internet service providers should also produce more content that is tailored to women's interests and needs. Gender-disaggregated data of women's online behavior can help to inform the creation of this content. The government could also support affordable pricing of internet and mobile phones services through digital tools market expansion and the promotion of free-market competition in the market of digital devices.

# Conclusion

The gender digital divide in Cambodia remains wide, in terms of both usage and the barriers that women are facing such as the lack of ICT skills, which makes it difficult for women to adapt to and adopt ICT. This is compounded by a lack of interest in digital tools due to gender stereotypes, online harassment, and time constraints due to disparities in domestic labor. As Cambodia is building its digital economy, the issue of the gender digital divide should be integrated into the country's ICT policies, plans, and strategies, so that the digital economy in Cambodia will be inclusive and beneficial to all social groups, particularly women. The story of Chenda at the beginning of the chapter is a good reflection of the future reality when the gender digital divide is narrowed. To bridge the gender digital divide, Cambodia should 1) ensure that there is sufficient data on the issue through the collection of gender-disaggregated data and the development of gender indicators, and 2) improve upon the existing gender mainstreaming policy and its implementation, to include effective monitoring and evaluation, as well as equipping line ministries with adequate capacity to carry out gender-related activities. On the

digital literacy side, Cambodia should promote ICT skills and digital literacy for women through formal education, capacity development training, and awareness-raising campaign. At the same time, Cambodia can bridge the technical access issue by expanding the market for digital tools and promote free-market competition. With the commitment and close cooperation from all relevant stakeholders, including the government, NGOs/civil society, and private sector actors, it is possible for Cambodia to achieve gender equality in ICTs.

# References

- Antonio, A., and Tuffley, D. (2014). The Gender Digital Divide in Developing Countries. *Future Internet*, *6*, 673–687. https://doi.org/10.3390/fi6040673
- GSMA. (2018). A Toolkit for Researching Women's Internet Access and Use. [Toolkits]. Retrieved from: https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/GSMA-Women-and-Internet-Research-Toolkit\_WEB.pdf
- Huyer, S., and Sikoska, T. (2003). *Overcoming the Gender Digital Divide: Understanding ICTs and their Potential for the Empowerment of Women*. Instraw. Retrieved from: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SHS/pdf/Overcoming-Gender-Digital-Divide.pdf
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU). (2020). *Measuring Digital Development: Facts and figures 2020*. Retrieved from: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/FactsFigures2020.pdf
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). (2018). *Project on Gender Mainstreaming for Women's Economic Empowerment: Project Completion Report*. Retrieved from: https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/1000036814.pdf
- Kong, M. (2019). Long-Term Policy Framework for Cambodia's Digital Economy [Consultation Workshop]. Retrieved from: https://set.odi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Presentation-on-Concept-Note-of-DE.pdf
- Liff, S., and Shepherd, A. (2004). An Evolving Gender Digital Divide? Oxford Internet Institute, 2, 1-8. Retrieved from: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\_id=1308492
- LIRNEasia. (2018). *AfterAccess: ICT access and use in Asia and the Global South*. Retrieved from: https://lirneasia.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/LIRNEasia-AfterAccess-Asia-Report.pdf
- Marsan, G. A., and Sey, A. (2021). Women's Participation in the Digital Economy. *Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia*, 2020(09), 5. https://think-asia.org/handle/11540/13359
- Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA). (2014a). *Cambodia Gender Assessment 2014: Leading the way (Executive Summary)*. Retrieved from:

  http://www.undp.org/content/dam/cambodia/docs/DemoGov/NearyRattanak4/Neary%20Rattanak%204%20-%20Summary\_Eng.pdf
- Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA). (2014b). *Gender: Gender Mainstreaming, Institution, Partnership, and Policy Context*. Retrieved from:

- https://www.kh.undp.org/content/dam/cambodia/docs/DemoGov/NearyRattanak4/Neary%20Rattanak%204%20-%20PB%20Gender%20Mainstreaming\_Eng.pdf
- Ministry of Women's Affairs. (2019). *Cambodia Report*. The 25th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). Retrieved from: https://asiapacificgender.org/sites/default/files/documents/Cambodia%20(English).pdf
- Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA). (2021). *Neary Rattanak V: Five Year Strategic Plan For Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment*. Retrieved from: https://www.mowa.gov.kh/detail/5955
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2018). *Bridging the digital gender divide: Include, upskill, innovate*. Retrieved from: http://www.oecd.org/going-digital/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf
- Pact. (2019). *Listening to Cambodian Young Women Entrepreneurs*. Retrieved from: https://www.pactworld.org/library/listening-cambodian-young-women-entrepreneurs
- Phong, K., Srou, L., and Solá, J. (2016). *Mobile Phones and Internet Use in Cambodia 2016*[Research Report]. USAID. Retrieved from: https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Mobile-Phones-and-Internet-Use-in-Cambodia-2016.pdf
- Picot, M. D., and Spath, K. (2020). *Women and the Future of the Digital Economy in Asia: Decent work for all?* (p. 33). Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Retrieved from: http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/singapur/16217.pdf
- Plan International. (2018). *Digital Empowerment of Girls*. Retrieved from: https://plan-international.org/publications/digital-empowerment-of-girls
- Sey, A., and Hafkin, N. (2019). *Taking Stock: Data and Evidence on Gender Digital Equality in Digital Access, Skills, and Leadership*. The EQUALS Research Group. Retrieved from: https://unu.edu/media-relations/releases/new-equals-research-group-report-unveils-persistent-digital-gaps-and-the-complexity-of-gender-equality-in-ict-access-skills-and-leadership.html
- Supreme National Economic Council (SNEC). (2021). *Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework Cambodia*. Retrieved from:

  https://data.opendevelopmentcambodia.net/en/library\_record/digital-economy-and-social-policy-framework-of-cambodia-2021-2035/resource/d29b116e-ffe2-48ba-8222-5bbdc2772c51

- Touch, S. (2018). Women in Cambodia's Digital Economy: Key Challenges and Opportunities. In *Digital Insight*. KAS Cambodia. https://www.kas.de/en/web/kambodscha/single-title/-/content/digital-insigh-1
- UN Women. (2018). *Gender equality and Big Data*. Retrieved from: https://www.unglobalpulse.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Gender-equality-and-big-data-en-2018.pdf
- UNDP. (2020). Assessment of Digital Literacy for Employability and Entrepreneurship among Cambodian Youth. Retrieved from:

  https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/library/assessment-of-digital-literacy-for-employability-and-entrepreneu.html
- UNESCAP. (n.d.). An Enabling ICT Policy Environment for Women Entrepreneurs in Cambodia.

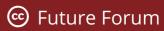
  Retrieved from: https://www.unapcict.org/sites/default/files/202002/Cambodia%20WIFI%20P%20Module 0.pdf
- UNICEF. (n.d.). Using big data for insights into the gender digital divide for girls: A discussion paper. UNICEF Gender and Innovation Evidence Briefs Insights into the Gender Digital Divide for Girls. Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org/eap/media/8326/file/%20Using%20big%20data%20for%20insig hts%20into%20the%20gender%20digital%20divide%20for%20girls:%20A%20discussion %20paper%20%20%20.pdf
- United Nations. (2021). *Goal 5 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs*. [website]. Retrieved from: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5
- USAID Cambodia. (2016). *Cambodia Gender Assessment*. Retrieved from: https://banyanglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Cambodia-Gender-Assessment-Report.pdf
- USAID. (2020). *The Gender Digital Divide Primer*. Retrieved from: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/GDD\_Primer.pdf
- Vanly, K. (2020). Women Empowerment in Cambodia: An Analysis on Economic and Political Participation of Women under Neary Rattanak IV Strategic Plan (2014-2018)

  (Unpublished Bachelor's thesis). Royal University of Phnom Penh. Available from: https://www.academia.edu/44766306/Women\_Empowerment\_in\_Cambodia\_An\_Analysis\_on\_Economic\_and\_Political\_Participation\_of\_Women\_under\_Neary\_Rattanak\_IV\_Strategic\_Plan\_2014\_2018\_



www.futureforum.asia





Core Donor

ស៊ុយអែត Sverige In Partnership **W**ith



