Gender and Internet for Development
The WOUGNET Experience

Session II: Internet, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction
WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2016: INTERNET FOR DEVELOPMENT
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Presentation Outline

‣ Gender Equity: Inclusion of Women and Girls

‣ Gender-sensitive approach to Internet for Development: Policies to increase benefits and opportunities

‣ Concluding Remarks

Globally, women are 21% less likely to own a mobile phone than men

In sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that only half the number of women are using ICT compared with men

More than one billion people in developing countries have a mobile phone but not a bank account
(HBS Case 2011)

200 million fewer women than men are online, and the gap could grow to 350 million within the next three years if action is not taken

By 2015, it is estimated that 90% of formal employment across all sectors will require ICT skills

Even in developed economies, women now account for fewer than 20% of ICT specialists

Photo: CTA

Gender Equity: Inclusion of Women & Girls

Government

- **Create gender-sensitive enabling environment through ICT polices to spur infrastructure, access, reach and availability**
- **Avail public funding such as universal access grants or subsidies**
- **Potential as heavy user of ICT services and applications**

Private sector

- **Provide investment and innovation in ICT infrastructure and services accessible by men and by women**

Academia/Civil society

- **Key providers of gender-sensitive accessible and relevant ICT applications that spur citizen utilisation and demand for ICTs**
- **Demand key as ICT infrastructure and service development are primarily private-sector led**

Civil Society in Action: WOUGNET

- Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) is a non-governmental organization initiated in May 2000 by several women's organisations in Uganda
  - to develop the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) among women as tools to share information and address issues collectively

- WOUGNET's vision is a society in which women are empowered through the use of ICTs for sustainable development

WOUGNET Activities

Information Sharing and Networking

- Provide relevant information to urban and rural women and youth, as well as facilitate sharing of experiences for purposes of improving quality of lives.

- Online and offline channels: email, web, social media, mobile phones in particular SMS, crowdsourcing, print materials, community radios and information centres

Technical Support

- Support women organizations and youth to access, utilize and apply ICTs in addressing within their activities

- Training, website design, research and piloting of innovative ICT applications

Gender and ICT Policy Advocacy

- Build capacity of network members to effectively influence the formulation and implementation of gender sensitive ICT policies and programs.

- Research for evidence based advocacy, engaging policy and decision makers, engendering national and local ICT policies and programs

Men spend more on communications than women
… women's expenditure on communications a greater share of their income
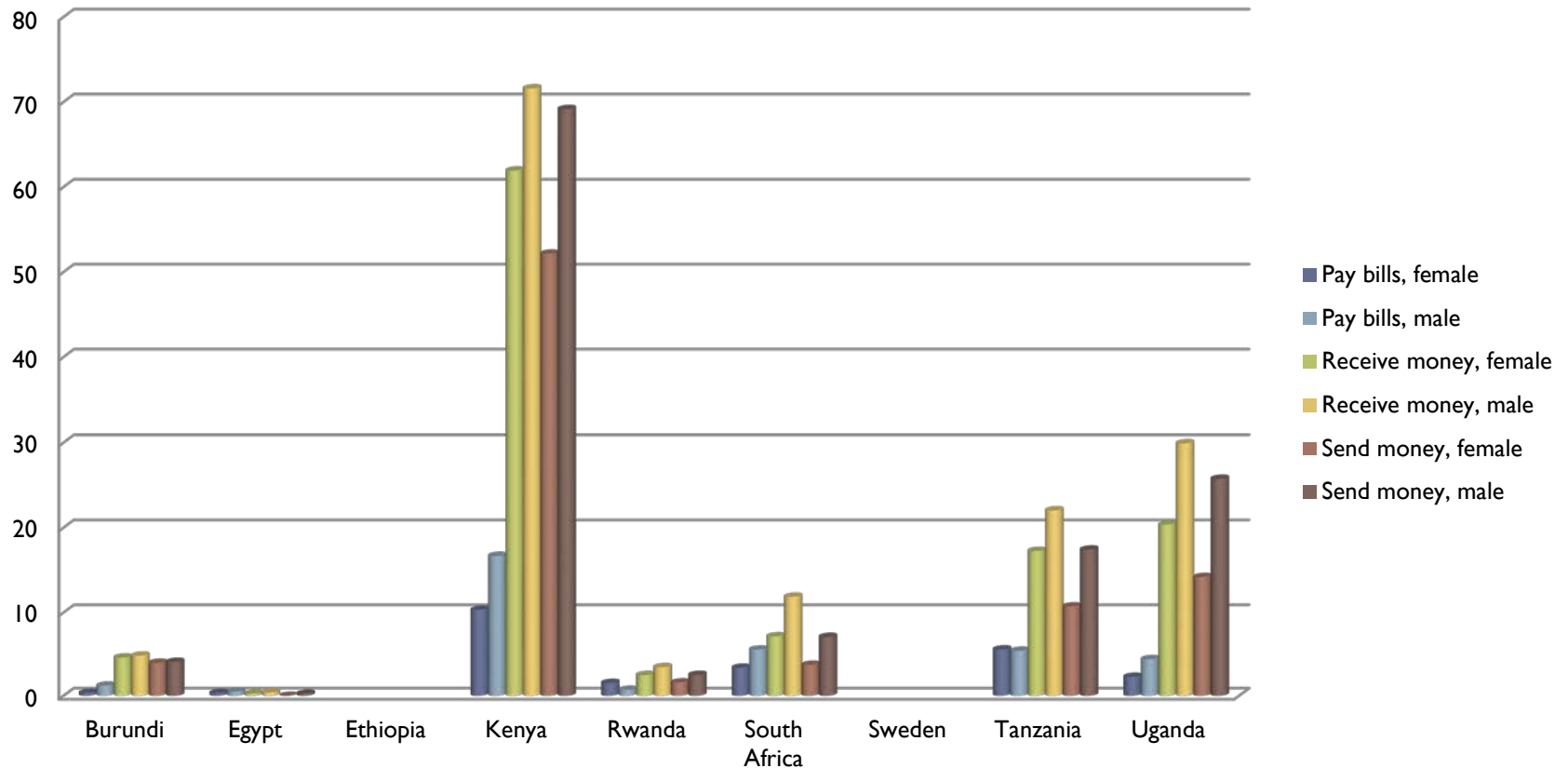
Mobile phone use, % age 15+ (ITU, 2011)

What policies can African governments and their development partners pursue

…. to help increase the economic benefits of the internet and ensure that these are widely shared?

A Gender Sensitive Approach to Policy Making in Internet for Development

Photo: ITU

Gender-sensitive approach to Internet for Dev
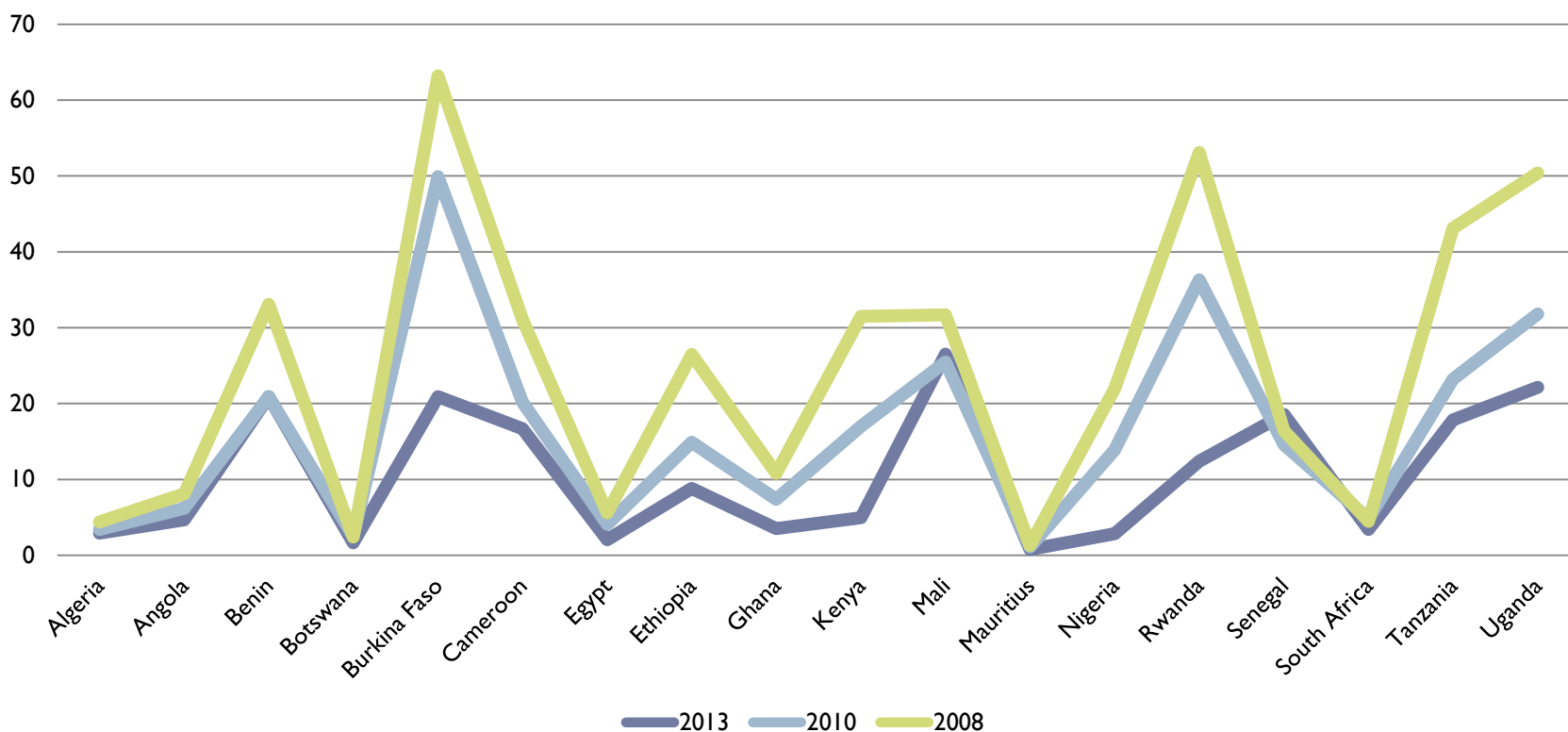
▸ Internet for Development should be aware of existing divides (education, financial, skill, etc.)

  ▸ Should not lead to widening of the gender divide

▸ Technology has evolved rapidly to widespread mobile devices, smart phones, Web2.0, crowdsourcing …

  ▸ Concerns and special needs, particularly, for rural and low-income women have not changed as much.

▸ GSMA mWomen findings from 2,500 women provide a good guide forward (GSMA mWomen 2012)

  ▸ 2,500 women from Egypt and Uganda in Africa, Papua New Guinea in the Pacific, and India in Asia

Gender-sensitive approach   …/2

- ***Internet/mobile (ICT) services and applications need to be accessible and relevant to the women's daily lives***

  - SMS services should have a clear value for money proposition
    - Only 37% of the women had used SMS compared to 77% that had made a phone call.

  - m/e-agriculture (and other) applications will need to be well integrated with the women's daily lives in order to attract uptake.
    - Of 84% women who were in need of better healthcare information, less than half of these were interested to receive this information via their mobile phones.

  - There is an opportunity to build on the potential of ICTs to be used for even micro and small-scale ICT or ICT-supported enterprises.
    - About three-quarters of participants were interested in establishing income generating activities to help support their families.

Affordability is key to enhancing
Internet for Development …

**Mobile cellular prices
as percentage of GNI per capita**

Legend: 2013, 2010, 2008

Countries (x-axis): Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda

Source: ITU, Measuring the Information Society, 2011, 2014

Gender-sensitive approach   .../3

‣ ***Lack of or limited ICT literacy skills hampers utilization of ICT services and applications***

  ‣ About a quarter of women interviewed were not interested in owning phones
    ‣ they did not know how to use phones.

  ‣ Although about a quarter of the women knew about mobile internet. Only 2% of the women had ever used mobile internet
    ‣ this places a constraint on the potential utilizations of mobile internet based services.

Gender-sensitive approach   .../4

- ***Need to integrate gender issues in ICT services and programs so as to promote equitable access for men and women in the community***

  - Involvement of men and key community leaders is key
    - about 75% of the women did not want a mobile phone because this would not be permitted by their spouses

  - In an ICTs and Violence against Women (VAW) study, over 80% of the married women reported that their husbands were very suspicious of them
    - because they owned mobile phones

  - Women groups were trusted within their respective communities and acknowledged as a vital source of information
    - Women groups could be considered when searching for early adopters of technology

Gender-sensitive approach …/5

Important to consider a range of media and ensure that messages are appropriately tailored for the target community

▸ Over half the research participants had used TV for entertainment and information

   ▸ TV/Video remains an important ICT tool with audio-visual capabilities

▸ WOUGNET's experience shows combination of ICT and rural information centres (RICs) can domesticate the use of ICTs

   ▸ Promote appropriation of locally relevant ICTs

   ▸ Support community's uptake through training, skills building and translation of materials

▸ ***Access to reliable and affordable energy sources remains a key driver for ICT sector growth, particularly in rural areas***

- ▸ **38%** of the women interviewed did not have easy access to energy sources

- ▸ Delays in accessing or sharing of information via ICTs often attributed to phone charging

  Phone charging at community level can also be a form of enterprise!

Concluding Remarks

▸ There is need to address fundamental issues related to Gender and Internet for Development in terms of:
  ▸ Infrastructure
    ▸ ICT hardware & software and Energy
  ▸ Relevance
  ▸ Affordability

▸ There is need for policy advocacy to ensure gender equitable access to ICTs

Concluding Remarks   …/2

- **Strategies to increase access, outreach of ICTs**

  - Promote low cost, low energy mobile devices

  - Promote use of local wireless networks as 'last mile' solution and as means of reducing internet access costs

  - Capacity building in repackaging of relevant and accessible information for dissemination and interaction via platforms such as podcasts, video tutorials, SMS, etc

  - Capacity building in basic gender analysis and in the development of relevant applications for ICT and Gender

  - Policy advocacy for favourable (and affirmative) environment for setup of affordable and accessible rural/underserved connectivity

Thank you for your kind attention!

For more information about WOUGNET, visit

http://www.wougnet.org

and

http://www.facebook.com/wougnet

Additional Slides – Gender mainstreaming in ICT

Introduction to Gender

▸ Sex is the biological difference between men and women

▸ Gender is used to describe those characteristics of men and women which are socially determined, in contrast to those which are biologically determined

People are born female or male but …

learn to be girls and boys …

who grow into women and men

Gender Mainstreaming in ICT

- Gender mainstreaming in ICT brings a gender perspective into the activities of ICT-based organisations/institutions

- Gender mainstreaming in ICT means:
  - Recognising that ICT involves diverse processes that are open to the influence of gender
  - Being aware that ICT organisations have a key role to play in creating gender equitable societies
  - Developing mechanisms to ensure that ICT is responsive to women as well as men's needs, perspectives and concerns
  - Mainstreaming a gender perspective in all ICT organisations' processes and activities
    - Policy making, R&D priority setting, budget allocation, HR management, community needs analysis, benchmark indicators, etc.

References

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