

Economics - Global Solutions Papers

Report on:

Judith Mariscal, Gloria Mayne, Urvashi Aneja, and Alina Sorgner (2018). Bridging the Gender Digital Gap. Economics Discussion Papers, No 2018-60, Kiel Institute for the World Economy. <http://www.economics-ejournal.org/economics/discussionpapers/2018-60>

1. Summary

The paper assesses the gender gap which exists in terms of access, ownership and use of digital technologies and calls for an effective promotion of women's digital adoption. The authors argue that those unable to use information and communication technologies, which are in particular women, will continue to fall behind, refraining them from the benefits of these technologies and thus increasing worldwide inequality. The authors claim that besides affordability socio-cultural factors are a key barrier for women. Therefore, the authors call for concrete policies to bridging the digital gender gap.

2. Conforming with guidelines

Does the paper respect the guidelines? (Relevance, significance and innovation for policy, recommendations rest on serious academic foundations)

- Yes.
- The topic is relevant in the global context as it addresses a major global challenge - gender gaps in digitalization - present all over the world, in particular in middle and low income countries.
- Given that half of the world's population are women and there is an ongoing transformation all over the world into a digital society with the scope to increase productivity and social development the topic is very significant.
- It rests upon serious academic foundations in particular on surveys on digital inclusion and academic publications. Some parts lack references however.
- It is written in nontechnical language appropriate for a broad spectrum of readers.
- The paper has the appropriate length (about 4000 words).
- The policy recommendations are coherently argued and are plausible to implement.

3. (Minor) remarks

- Challenge: excellent, part on mobile phones could be streamlined to the rest of the text, maybe put it before the paragraph on policies ("Thus, policies aimed at reducing....) to make this part more coherent.
- Barriers to Inclusion: This part illustrates with the example of India how socio-cultural factors affect women's digital inclusion. While this example is very compelling it would be nice to get at least one other country example to stress that it is not only India where these barriers exist.
- Proposal: References for the case studies should be added. An example where women are trained on using mobile devices for financial transaction or to increase financial inclusion through the use of ICTs would be a big asset. The same holds true for an example of the labor market.
- Policy Recommendations: The last few bullet points seem a little "neglected" compared to the first points. These could be developed and specified further.

5. Decision: Ready to publish after minor revisions