



Summary of 4th e-conversation

Is gender inclusion in the framework of D4Ag projects a genuine need or a must-include component to satisfy donors' #expectations?

E-conversation framework:

From a donor's perspective, gender inclusion is increasingly becoming a key criterion for funding decisions. Many donors, including governments, multilateral institutions, and private foundations, have made gender equality a priority area and require grantees to demonstrate their commitment to gender mainstreaming in project design,

implementation, and monitoring. In the context of D4Ag, the focus is on women with the objective that D4Ag services and opportunities, a prevailing preserve of men, are equally open to them.

When it comes to digitalisation for agriculture (D4Ag), female participation in electronic discussion fora or social media thematic groups is substantially lower compared to their male counterparts. Is this an indicator of women's lower interest in the subject?

Is D4Ag an area where stakeholders should invest and bring more women at the forefront (if so, why, and how best?), or should donor investment focus more on supporting women's adoption of digital solutions in areas where women's interest is the highest?

Considering the diversity of potential actors who could benefit from acquired familiarity with D4Ag, would prioritizing women, exclude other less favoured groups?



Starting date	Closing date	Number of posts	Unique contributions	New members	Geographic spread of contributors
17 April 2023	4 May 2023	24	16 (57% female)	46	Africa, Europe, Middle East and Caribbean

Some takeaways

- We should be very much aware that what is working for woman A, may not work for woman B. (Caroline Figueres). No one glove fits all (Ednah Karamagi)
- Gender inclusion is a social issue, not a technological one. Technology can help improve the situation when the intention to include women is a real priority (not just lip-service). When not well-designed and implemented, technological solutions could just widen the gap and stand in the way of inclusion and connection. (Caroline Figueres)
- Low participation of women in electronic discussion fora or social media thematic groups does not necessarily indicate a lack of interest. Rather, it could be due to a range of factors, including limited access to digital devices and the internet, lack of digital literacy, socio-cultural norms, and gender-based discrimination (Arsene Birindwa). Women are constrained by the gender roles that inhibit their mobility and access to information (Maureen Agena). Women access to digital devices is limited especially when there's only a single device per household, it's understood to be the man's belonging! (Rose Funja). There is the need to dig deeper (Ednah Karamagi).
- Decades of cultural repression, economic subjugation and social intimidation have resulted in perceptions and behaviours that require being unlearned first (Adekoya Adegbeniga E).

Way forward

- Considering the rapidly growing importance of digitalisation in the various sectors of national / global economies there is the need for more women to be active in the digital ecosystems and more women using digital solutions (if these solutions work for them). This to avoid widening the gap between men and women. D4Ag is not the sole sub-sector having this problem of low women representation.
- The analysis of the underlying causes of disparities would provide the right direction towards not just equitable but equal inclusion of women in the subject as well as other development initiatives.
- Women play a pivotal role across agricultural value chains. Their access and use of digital solutions is compounded by a range of constraints that have been widely mentioned in this e-

conversation. Development actors cannot afford to turn a blind eye but instead focus their investments to foster a favourable and fair playing field which is gender inclusive. One key entry point mentioned during the e-conversation is applying a human-centred approach, by designing solutions that conceptualise around women's needs. A full understanding and appreciation of respective social systems will provide guidance on specific approach that will work.

- Ensuring D4Ag exposure and creating safe and inclusive spaces for women to network, exchange knowledge, and learn from each other in a range of different languages are key facets of potential actions supported by development agencies.
- A lot of digitisation projects use English as a default language for communication, leaving many excluded. Language barriers should be possibly addressed.

Shared resources

- Bolt J. & Chimhanda K.. 2023. [Being a woman in D4Ag is no big deal](#). Digital Agri Hub
- Girls and ICTs Day <https://www.itu.int/women-and-girls/girls-in-ict>
- Inclusive is not enough: Agrifood value chains need gender-responsive business development. (not focused on ICT but includes comments on the topic <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc4481en> - published in 2023, by FAO)
- Bridging the Gender Divide in [Digital Technology Courses and Careers in Kenya](#) (2023)
- Gender equality and women's and girls' autonomy in the digital era: [Contributions of education and digital transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (UN ECLAC, 2023)
- Fostering [Women Entrepreneurship in the Digital Economy](#) (UNCTAD) – 2022
- Reaching and Empowering [Women with Digital Solutions in the Agricultural Last Mile](#) published in the framework of the Digital AgriHub initiative by GSMA (2022)
- UNESCO Science report 2021: - Chapter 3: [to be smart, the digital revolution will need to be inclusive](#) (also addresses women involvement in AI)
- Alexandra Tyers-Chowdhury and Gerda Binder. 2021. [What we know about the gender digital divide for girls: A literature review](#), UNICEF, 23 pages
- OECD. 2018. [Bridging the digital gender divide: include, upskill, innovate](#). 151 pages
- Sun Bing, Mao Hongying, Yin Chengshun 2020 [Male and Female Users' Differences in Online Technology Community Based on Text Mining](#), Front. Psychol., Vol 11. 26 May 2020
- The [K-NoW](#) Network of Women (NoW) in ICT in the Caribbean (CTU Focal Point for ITU's Network of Women)

