

ENABLING ECOSYSTEMS FOR YOUNG WOMEN'S SOCIAL INNOVATION

Young Women-Led
Community-Based
Research Findings





DOT believes that when young women are equipped with digital literacy and skills AND they are supported by an enabling ecosystem of partners, they can achieve transformative change in their communities that can outlast any single project or program.

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

DOT's Ecosystem Approach to Tackling Gender Inequality

Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) is an international NGO headquartered in Ottawa, Canada, with local offices in Africa and the Middle East. DOT mobilizes and inspires all underserved and disadvantaged young people with digital literacy, 21st-century skills and the self-confidence that will enable them to thrive in an inclusive digital economy. DOT Tanzania has been running youth-led programs focused on sustainable economic growth since 2013.

Daring to Shift (D2S) is a 4-year project in partnership with Global Affairs Canada and is focused on equipping tens of thousands of youth with digital skills for jobs and business and supporting them with the skills, knowledge, tools, and networks to become social entrepreneurs. Co-designed with youth, D2S trusts young people as drivers of their own livelihoods, and as peer-to-peer trainers, coaches, mentors, and role models in their communities. It is building a future where young women and men can co-create innovative solutions with development partners, to achieve enhanced gender equality, increase digital literacy, and accelerate inclusion and growth.

At the heart of DOT's work is bridging the gender digital divide while tackling gender inequality. To do so, DOT takes a gender equity approach. This includes reaching at least 70% young women as participants in our training programs, and including young women as co-designers to more meaningfully reflect their unique needs and preferences, and ensure that the most underserved youth, especially young women, can access, feel included, and meaningfully benefit from digital inclusion initiatives.

However, we know that it is not sufficient to build individual capacity among our young women participants alone. To tackle the gender digital divide and gender inequality, we need to work in collaboration across the 'digital social innovation ecosystem'. This ecosystem is also made up of policy makers, regional bodies, national and local governments, civil society organizations, research institutions, education providers, employers, and private sector service providers (Financial Service Providers, BDS, Mobile and Internet).



The gender digital divide is felt through overlapping barriers that limit young women's ability to apply their knowledge and skills to advance their careers and businesses, including but not limited to:

- Discriminatory norms and attitudes about young women's leadership abilities, and stigma against their use of digital tools and platforms;
- Lack of and restricted access to digital infrastructure, tools, resources;
- Lack of information about training and professional development opportunities and access to professional networks and mentorship;
- High levels of Technology-facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV), and lack of safety and inclusion in online and offline spaces.

Addressing these barriers is critical because digital literacy is one of the most in-demand skills across all workplaces, and youth that do not have access to digital resources, literacy, and skills are likely to continue be excluded from higher quality employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. For example, in Tanzania women have lower labor participation rates and a higher unemployment rate than men. Women are more likely than men to be unpaid family workers, and tend to be concentrated in lower paid, informal roles and sectors², with 69.9% of women working in agriculture, followed by retail trade, accommodation and food services, and human health and social work.³ These employment gaps stand to widen as more low-skilled jobs become automated, and having a higher level of education and digital skills becomes increasingly sought-after in the job market⁴. Young women's inability to access and use digital technologies is likely to limit their ability to apply for dignified work opportunities, and women without access to such platforms run the risk of receiving significantly lower wages for their work than current market wages, leading to an even wider gender pay gap.⁵

What is the Gender Digital Divide and the Digital Skills Gap?

Tackling the gender digital divide is pivotal to DOT Tanzania given that digital technology can create a snowball effect for young women, and be a game changer for economic and social inclusion. Digital technologies – and the ability to use them effectively – can position women to become financially independent and build their confidence, enabling women to join the workforce and earn an income through flexible pathways that may include accessing online education, starting their own businesses or participating in the informal economy.¹

However, the gendered digital divide in the 'digital social innovation ecosystem' is characterized by persistent and systemic barriers that are rooted in unequal gender norms, resulting in many young women struggling to gain digital literacy and skills and meaningful experience with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) that would ensure that they are included in the digital shift.

¹ UNESCO, [I'd Blush if I Could: Closing Gender Divides in Digital Skills Through Education](#), 2019

² Global Gender Gap Report 2021. (2021). World Economic Forum. Calculated from 2019 data.

³ Global Gender Gap Report 2021. (2021). World Economic Forum. Calculated from 2019 data.

⁴ Petrone, P. 2019. The skills companies need most in 2019 and how to learn them. The Learning Blog, 1 January 2019. LinkedIn.

⁵ Sorgner, A. et.al. (2019) Bridging the Gender Digital Gap. Economics E-Journal 13(1).



The gender digital divide also exacerbates barriers to young women's entrepreneurship, who struggle more to gain a firm foothold in entrepreneurship and are less likely than men to start businesses in growth-oriented sectors due to long standing social and cultural norms. As a result, women commonly start businesses in less profitable and informal sectors, such as small retail sales and food preparation, that have lower barriers to entry. Women, and young women in particular, are also typically unable to grow their businesses beyond small-scale subsistence operations. In Tanzania, women face limited opportunities for dignified and fulfilling work, pushing them to start or run their own businesses out of necessity; roughly 55% of small and medium enterprises in Tanzania are owned by women. While women make up almost 60% of Africa's self-employed workforce, they are granted less funding, and receive less training and mentorship than men. Women are more likely than men to be unbanked, and often do not possess the collateral necessary to secure financing to start or scale their businesses. Women have fewer savings, and less access to social protection and formal financial products, like loans, that could help them weather the storm during economic volatility. The gender digital divide limits young women's ability to leverage digital technology and innovation to formalize and scale their SMEs, exacerbating the barriers to entrepreneurship for young women. In fact, only 24% of formal firms in Tanzania are majority owned by women and only 14% of firms have a woman as the top manager.⁶

Further, in the digital innovation sector, including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and ICT fields, women face increased barriers that limit their opportunities for work, and restrict their opportunities for leadership.. Women working in the digital sector are more likely to be underpaid for their work, and as the digital sector grows and more jobs become digital-intensive, this trend has the potential to further exacerbate the pay gap between men and women. Women also leave technology-related fields in disproportionate numbers, both during their transition from higher education and in their career cycles, and disparities in representation and opportunities for promotion make retaining women a challenge for the digital sector.⁷ Recognizing the urgency to address the digital inclusion gap, the Government of Tanzania has introduced its National Digital Economy Strategy, aimed to "effectively assure a digital society without digital gender disparity" in the space of 10 years.⁸ While this is an encouraging step forward, the persistence of this gendered digital divide in combination with the urgency to address the lack of access, safety, and inclusion for young women in the digital social innovation ecosystem means that ecosystem stakeholders need to work together at a systems level to bring together collaborators who also aim to support young women on their social innovation journey to learn, iterate, and improve how we all serve the communities we work with.

⁶ Global Gender Gap Report 2021. (2021). World Economic Forum. Calculated from 2019 data.

⁷ German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). 2017. Women's Pathways to the Digital Sector: Stories of Opportunities and Challenges. Bonn, BMZ.

⁸ Okafor, C. (2023). [Following International Women's Day, Tanzania is looking to close the gender gap in its digital sector.](#) Business Insider.

DOT Tanzania's Solution: Gender and Digital Skills Working Group

To build this enabling ecosystem, DOT Tanzania has convened the Gender and Digital Skills Working Group (GDSWG), including local partners in the digital inclusion and youth livelihoods sector to create space and opportunity for collaborative learning from each other.

DOT Tanzania, Young Women Researchers, and the GDSWG members developed the following shared objectives:

- Creating safe and inclusive environments for young women to be leaders in the digital economy;
- Increasing knowledge and skills, and improved mindsets supporting young women's leadership in digital innovation among DOT Tanzania's ecosystem partners;
- Increasing collaboration and impact among DOT's partner organizations working to close the gender digital divide;
- Affecting Gender-Progressive ICT policy, and resource allocation to achieve systems level impact at the national level.



“It is high time that all stakeholders develop their own digital inclusion policies and programs, and embrace the urgency to ensure young women can access and meaningfully benefit from digital technology and innovation.”

(Young Women Researcher, shared during Community Needs and Asset Mapping Workshops)



Methodology & Limitations

DOT Tanzania's Co-Design of Participatory Community-Based Research

Given the imperative to increase capacity among the CoP members, DOT's Gender Team sought to understand how to use gender transformative approaches to research and learning that can shift the traditional power dynamics of who typically produces knowledge (research consultants, INGOs etc.), and who impacts decision-making over the design and implementation of new programs and policies.

DOT Tanzania recruited ten Young Women Researchers (YWRs) from Daring to Shift's Community Leader program to engage in a series of Participatory Community-Based Research workshops, Key Informant Interviews, and Focus Group Discussions to generate youth-led community-based action research on the barriers young women face to build skills and experience in digitally enabled livelihoods and social innovation, and what policies, programs and/or approaches would better support their needs and priorities. DOT Tanzania also engaged four young men in these workshops to ensure we consider how social norms around men's roles and responsibilities reinforce the stigma against young women's leadership in digital technology.

Data was gathered and analyzed using a thematic qualitative method to identify patterns, themes, or categories within the data that can help researchers understand the underlying meanings and provide rich and nuanced insights into participants' experiences and perspectives.

Community-Based action research used gender-transformative approaches that emphasize the importance of the empowering process of generating research as much as the results, and DOT worked to provide the YWRs with tangible skills while producing research findings that speak to young women's community-driven priorities. By using this approach, DOT Tanzania and the GDSWG assert that young women are the experts in the issues that impact them, and furthers the imperative of 'Nothing About Us Without Us'.

Our researchers and activities

DOT Tanzania and the team of YWRs developed several key research questions through participatory community-based research workshops, including:

1. How can we ensure young women are meaningfully included in digital skills training, education, and experience opportunities?
2. What are the gaps in the digital skills and innovation ecosystem in terms of access, safety, and inclusion for young women?
3. What works to shift unequal gender norms within the digital social innovation ecosystem?

DOT Tanzania supported the YWRs to complete 5 Key Informant Interviews with key members of the GDSWG that shared their expertise and lessons learned through their ongoing work with young women, and two Focus Group Discussions with young women participants currently engaged in DOT's Daring to Shift training programs.

What were the limitations of our CBR?

This participatory community-based research is not representative of all community-based perspectives among organizations and stakeholders in the digital social innovation ecosystem, and it is also not an exhaustive discussion on GE issues. Rather, these findings highlight a snapshot of the key issues that resonated most with this group of current DOT Community Leader program participants. The Participatory Community-Based Research workshops, KIIs, and FGDs were also limited to virtual engagement, which is sometimes characterized by periodic disruptions due to unstable internet connectivity and power outages etc.

COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH FINDINGS

What is an Enabling Ecosystem for Young Women Social Innovators?

DOT Tanzania Young Women Researchers identified how consideration for meaningful inclusion needs to take a holistic approach that can respond to the overlapping complexities of young women's needs and priorities. For example, ensuring access to digital tools and platforms alone is not enough. Once young women have access, are they safe in these spaces? Do they feel like they belong and can explore new things? and are they supported by mentors and service providers along their journey to be leaders in their workplaces, or to scale their businesses? Below are highlights of a community-based vision for gender equality in the digital social innovation ecosystem:

Access

- Young women have information about opportunities to build and practice their digital skills, and are able to receive this information through relevant and trusted local mechanisms. Available information is in youth-friendly and translated language and in formats that are compatible with the most basic digital devices that young women can access (e.g. mobile phones);
- But, it is not enough for young women to know about opportunities, and to meaningfully benefit from increased access young women are:
 - Supported to navigate processes to access information, and apply for opportunities;
 - Trust that organizations and institutions will keep them safe if they engage, and that their participation will benefit their job, business, or digital social innovation goals.
- Young women have the confidence and motivation to claim their rights and are empowered to take advantage of opportunities available to them;
- Special consideration and increased resources are allocated to young women in rural and remote communities, including critical information, digital infrastructure (internet, mobile, devices, power), and opportunities for training and skills building;

Safety

- Young women and their support systems and gatekeepers feel safe online, and trust that guardrails are in place to protect the users of digital platforms and tools, and this enables them to engage in digital technology and innovation free from fear;
- Young women have a comprehensive awareness of their rights, in learning and work environments, and on digital platforms;
- Young women are able to build a career, or start and run a business, free from any harm, including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. For example, young women will not face sexual exploitation and transactional requests when trying to secure a business loan;
- Young women have increased networks with other women, and increased representation of young women in learning and work spaces that can build greater connection and systems of peer support;
- Young women feel empowered to show off their successes and achievements, free from harassment or judgment on their looks, doubt about how they got what they have, and censorship of their opinions or perspectives.

Belonging and community

- Young women feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings, ask questions, and voice their opinions, and trust that their peers and mentors will approach them free from judgment and discrimination;
- Young women can see themselves represented among the staff, facilitators, and recruiters of training and learning programs;
- Young women have a supportive and enabling network of family, friends, colleagues, managers, and mentors, and they have a resulting sense of security and sense of self worth.
- Young women feel empowered with the sense that they are important, respected, and valued, and have the confidence and resilience to take risks to try new tasks and break barriers in non-traditional roles and sectors.

Key Gender Equality Issues in the Digital Social Innovation Ecosystem

SOCIAL NORMS AND MINDSETS

Community Insights

- Stereotypes and attitudes among family, peers and community define and restrict the kinds of roles and sectors that young women should be a part of. Young women internalize these, resulting in lower levels of confidence, a lack of belonging and feelings of ‘imposter syndrome, leaving them behind in digital innovation spaces. These gendered expectations also limit young women’s ability to explore areas of interest, learn new digital skills, cultivate their curiosity, and take risks in order to innovate.
 - One DOT youth participant highlighted, “Because women are oppressed in so many spheres of life, they do not have the culture for trying new things”. DOT youth participant, FGD.
- Gender norms also limit opportunities for girls and young women to pursue higher education (University, college, and TVET), and current primary and secondary education curriculum does not adequately provide underpinning knowledge and training that can support careers in STEM and digital innovation.
- Young women entrepreneurs feel that digital spaces and training opportunities are not created for them, and are not designed to meet their needs. When deciding to pursue opportunities, young women carefully consider the level of impact of programs and how useful it will be to their businesses.
- Fear of digital spaces among young women and their family limits how they engage in digital technology. Young women fear unknown platforms or tools, and don’t understand their right to safety, how to protect themselves, and how to seek support if they need it. Young women’s access to digital devices is restricted because there is stigma about their online activities, and they are not believed to be engaged in productive, or positive things.
- Women are constrained by societal and community misconceptions, and are not empowered to take advantage of digital opportunities to be leaders in the digital economy. Their communities do not expect them to take on work in digital spaces because it is perceived to be the wrong thing to do. Therefore, for young women who want to break the barriers to pursue non-traditional roles or work in digital sectors, there is little to no support and accommodation.
- Norms around young women in digital technology and innovation are reinforced by the lack of representation of women in STEM sectors, especially in leadership roles. This is also reinforced by the structure and staffing of organizations and institutions themselves.
 - For example, one DOT youth highlighted that “if most facilitators and ambassadors for digital inclusion programs are men, how can young women think she can access that kind of opportunity”. DOT youth participant, FGD.
 - However, one CBO representative noted that “with the president being female, people are now looking at leadership as an opportunity, in a way that if the president can do it why not them or her.” CBO Stakeholder, KII.
- The expected and encouraged roles and responsibilities for unpaid care work by their support systems, limit young women’s time for professional development. As a result, young women are often held back from participating in activities and programs because of concerns that their household duties will be unfulfilled. They may also have less flexibility, time available, or freedom of movement to pursue opportunities to strengthen their skills and gain experience, and pursue projects they are passionate or curious about.
 - For example, one community-based organization stakeholder reflected that some of their women participants “are not as active during the facilitation because the majority of them were tied to household duties and obligations, which prevented them from being completely engaged in the digital world” - CBO Stakeholder, KII.
 - Another youth participant shared, “If I spend all my time online, who would take care of the housework” - DOT youth participant, FGD.

Key Gender Equality Issues in the Digital Social Innovation Ecosystem

SOCIAL NORMS AND MINDSETS

Recommended actions

- The urgency to address the gender digital divide means we need to build young women's digital literacy and skills to keep up with the pace of digital innovation and the future of work, or young women risk being left behind.
 - In a FGD with DOT youth, one woman shared that “The ecosystem is ready for us so the women should take steps to include themselves in digital platforms”, in order to seize opportunities that already exist in the ecosystem.
- Change the perception that digital platforms, spaces, and tools are exclusively for men among young women, and their peers, family, and community members. Especially important is to work to shift mindsets and enable family members to be a support system that can encourage their meaningful engagement in digital skills training.
- Encourage women to shift from the mindset that digital skills are too difficult for them to learn towards building curiosity, courage, and confidence to try new things and build new skills in digital technology and innovation.
 - Need to increase and encourage willingness of women to use digital skills for innovation (to be curious), and to learn different courses online like graphics (things that add value to your job or business).
 - Slowly layer knowledge, and ease young women into learning how digital skills can help them in their daily lives to encourage them to focus on new or unfamiliar topics.
- Understand that shifting norms and mindsets takes time, especially to build trust, and respect among stakeholders. Solutions cannot be accomplished in a one-day training because we may not be able to change the norms underlying the perception of women (stigma, stereotypes, assumptions).
- Raise awareness among community members about the value of digital inclusion, women's rights and women's economic empowerment.
- Understand that young women need to see themselves, and believe they belong in digital innovation spaces for them to feel comfortable entering a space or participating in a program. Greater representation of the highs and lows of women in STEM is needed to inspire young women to have the courage to bridge the digital divide.
- Leverage peer-to-peer approaches for impactful learning experiences for young women, to increase the representation of young women in digital innovation spaces, and create safer and more inclusive learning environments to learn new skills.
- Do not wait for young women to find opportunities on their own. Instead, meet young women and their families where they are now, and make sure women have access to information.



Key Gender Equality Issues in the Digital Social Innovation Ecosystem

ONLINE AND OFFLINE SAFETY

Community Insights

- Online violence severely hinders women's participation in digital spaces; young women fear they will face harassment, abuse, or exploitation, and leave platforms where they have experienced this.
- Young women do not feel empowered to freely express their ideas online without fear, reprisals or intimidation, and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is extremely common. Young women are afraid of being harassed about their appearance, the content they post, or voicing opinions about and exercising their rights.
- Lack of safety is critical to understanding issues of young women's access to resources and opportunities; they will not seek out digital spaces, learn digital skills and gain digital literacy to avoid potentially harmful situations, and they will leave platforms where they have experienced abuse or harassment.
 - One CBO stakeholder highlighted, "If the women do not feel safe they will be scared. If they feel that they can be scammed or abused then it will hinder their presence online." CBO Stakeholder, KII
- Existing laws need to be enforced, and new policies and laws need to be created to establish rights-based standards for safety for all youth.
 - One youth participant argued for the enforcement of laws to create accountability among perpetrators, stating, "Women should be protected from digital harm by laws, and these laws should be put into effect so that those who engage in such behavior will be scared." DOT youth participant, FGD.

Recommended actions

- Provide training for women on how to navigate the realities of lack of safety in digital spaces, including building knowledge of their rights and confidence to use digital platforms and tools, how to stay safe and protect their privacy and data on digital platforms, and how to access support if they experience Technology-Facilitated GBV.
- Co-design digital platforms and tools with women, especially young women, and ensure that young women are co-creating content to support increasing the representation of young women.
- Build trust with young women through the moderation of online platforms and programs and through accountability mechanisms that are confidential and result in survivor-centered support and action to address the harassment/abuse.
- Advocate for updated policy and legal frameworks to create safer online spaces and experiences for youth, especially young women, and create policies that are supportive of young women's digital inclusion and innovation. Hold private sector stakeholders accountable for lack of safety in their platforms or tools, and work collaboratively to advance youth-friendly and gender transformative policies.



Key Gender Equality Issues in the Digital Social Innovation Ecosystem

DIVERSE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF YOUNG WOMEN IN DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Community Insights

- Age and Geographical locations are factors that affect young women's ability to be engaged, interested and seek out opportunities and build their skills to become leaders in digital technology and innovation.
- Overlapping vulnerabilities compound the barriers to access and inclusion in digital technology and innovation.
 - Young women from rural communities and from lower income households have less access to quality education, and training in digital and 21st century skills, and have more limited options to build these skills. They also have less access to affordable and reliable digital tools (smartphones, laptops, tablets) and digital infrastructure (internet, mobile networks, power). Young women from rural areas also tend to get married and start their families earlier, creating barriers through the increased time they use on unpaid care work and cultural expectations for them to prioritize their caregiving role in the household.
 - One DOT youth noted that "women in rural areas are more behind in accessing the digital skills. People in rural areas tend to be occupied with household duties and farming." DOT youth participant, FGD.
 - Another DOT youth elaborated on this difference: "In urban environments people think they have to learn digital skills because the world is running too fast while in rural areas, the priorities are different". DOT youth participant, FGD.
- There are diverse needs and priorities across the age range of 'youth' (18-35), and these need to be considered and tailored to these specific priorities.
 - Young women at the lower end of this range (18-25) have a willingness and curiosity to learn new digital skills, and may have access to greater numbers of opportunities, but are heavily influenced by gatekeepers (parents and siblings) and have less autonomy to explore digital spaces.
 - Women at the older end of this range are balancing the expectation for them to prioritize care for their children and families over generating income and pursuing their career aspirations. Opportunities to build digital literacy and skills are less visible to women who are largely home-based as they lack access to information about opportunities to build capacity and access funding resources. They may also be less risk averse, or may lack interest and curiosity to learn new skills and abilities, or may be fearful of unknown topics or experiences.



Key Gender Equality Issues in the Digital Social Innovation Ecosystem

DIVERSE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF YOUNG WOMEN IN DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Recommended actions

- Engage in needs assessments with young women to understand their priorities across different age groups and different geographies and communities.
- Complete comprehensive risk assessments in partnership with young women to understand their safety concerns and mitigate the risks they may face online and offline.
- Co-design learning content that provides digital and 21st century skills that relate to young women's realities, and the jobs or businesses they want to succeed in;
 - Marketing skills, including how to brand a successful business, how to champion their expertise, and build their professional networks;
 - Content creation, including writing business plans, and contributing to online platforms.
 - Financial literacy such as how to save and manage money.
 - Data management and Excel
 - Online research and media literacy
- Leverage existing and trusted community mechanisms and CBOs to reach the most underserved young women, such as refugees, and those living with disabilities (e.g. people living with disabilities such as shivyawata). Work with local leaders, government authorities and associations that serve specific communities of young women. For example, rural areas can use village meetings or the notice board at the village or local offices.
- Use approaches to implementation that consider the formats, frequencies, and modalities that will work best for young women from where they are at. a. Timing of learning sessions, training workshops and events should
 - Timing of learning sessions, training workshops and events should be considerate of young women's availability; b. Spaces where young women participate should be
 - considerate of young women's safety concerns, and ensure they uphold young women's rights to safety and autonomy;
 - Ensure accessibility of programming by holding training programs and events in locations accessible by transportation, and provide financial support to ensure they can access this transportation.
 - Likewise, to ensure access to virtual programs and ensure practice and application of digital skills, encourage collaboration and partnerships with telecommunication companies and BDS providers to provide affordable digital tools and internet access. For example, develop a bundle that would be more affordable for young women to encourage them to spend longer times online and be able to practice their digital skills.
 - Content relevancy and simplicity. - Accounting for relevance and satisfaction of young women in training programs, also ensuring that content delivered is youth-friendly, and translated into local language as necessary.



DOT TANZANIA GENDER AND DIGITAL SKILLS WORKING GROUP:

Recommendations for Reaching Young Women

- Invest time and resources to build trust with the community, and respect among all stakeholders to create partnerships and programs that consider the time and effort it takes to shift unequal gender norms.
- Raise awareness of digital technology and its value with young women, their peers, family and community members to change the perception that digital platforms, spaces and tools are only for men through information sessions, media content, and ongoing community outreach.
- Hold information sessions for family and community members and celebrate young women's achievements by inviting supportive family members (partners, parents, siblings) to events throughout young women's engagement (orientation sessions, kick-off, graduation).
- Highlight the journeys of young women to increase the representation of women in digital innovation and STEM sectors, including revealing the highs and lows of women's career journeys to demonstrate role models and build a picture of what is possible to encourage young women to develop aspirations and set goals for themselves.
- Understand young women's need to see themselves represented for them to feel comfortable entering spaces or accessing programs and make young women feel like projects or initiatives are for them:
 - Ensure women are included in staff teams, and leverage these women to outreach to young women in the community
 - Highlight the organization's or institution's previous experience working with young women
 - Use quotas to engage equal or greater numbers of young women as participants, and share this with prospective participants.
- Use trusted channels and work with local community leaders and community-based organizations to reach young women where they are, instead of waiting for them to come to the opportunity on their own, to engage the most underserved young women, including refugee youth and youth living with disabilities.
- Create youth-friendly information about program offerings, application processes, activities, and approaches, and make these available in multiple accessible formats to ensure all young women can access information about opportunities available.

DOT TANZANIA GENDER AND DIGITAL SKILLS WORKING GROUP:

Recommendations for Safeguarding Young Women

- Prioritize safety for all youth as a critical minimum standard and build trust with young women and their communities in the safety of a program, initiative, or service by demonstrating transparency and accountability.
- Create or update policy for Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH), including a comprehensive Code of Conduct for all staff and participants.
- Provide onboarding and refresher training for all staff on organizational values, expected behaviors outlined in the Code of Conduct, and have them read, understand, and sign the PSEAH policy.
- Complete comprehensive risk assessments in partnership with young women to understand their safety concerns, highlight potential unintended consequences, develop plans to mitigate these risks, and action these plans through creating SOPs and dedicating budget for activities.
- Map the risks of online engagement and digital literacy and skills training programs for young women, and develop digital safety and cyber-security policies and procedures that are updated regularly.
- Co-design digital platforms, tools, and digital literacy and skills training programs with young women to ensure safety risks and considerations are included in the design of programs, initiatives, and services.
- Provide training for youth participants, including young women, on:
 - What are their rights to safety online and offline;
 - How to stay safe and protect their privacy on digital platforms;
 - How to access support if they have experienced any form of Exploitation, Abuse, or Harassment.
- Create accessible and confidential reporting systems that all participants and staff have access to, provide training on how to use them, and monitor reporting channels daily.
- Ensure that there is a dedicated Safeguarding Focal Point (SFP) in the organization or institution that can receive reports of SEAH, provide support to survivors, and champion safe approaches.
- Provide 'survivor-centered' support to participants and/or staff that have come forward to report SEAH incidents, and provide referrals to medical care and GBV support services as directed by the survivor.
- Ensure accountability to communities by taking action to address and respond to SEAH, including actioning clear consequences for breaching the Code of Conduct (e.g. termination), regularly updating SOPs to accurately reflect organizational structures, and providing refresher training for staff and participants.

DOT TANZANIA GENDER AND DIGITAL SKILLS WORKING GROUP:

Recommendations for Gender-Inclusive Design and Implementation

- Carry out needs assessments with young women to understand their priorities across different age groups, different geographies, refugee youth, and youth living with disabilities.
- Engage young women in the co-design of program strategies, projects, services and digital and 21st-century skills learning content meant to benefit them to ensure relevance to young people's daily lives;
- Work to shift mindsets among young women that digital skills are too difficult, and to build their confidence and courage to take on new challenges.
- Engage men and boys as gender equality champions and allies, build empathy among young men and women, and build respect for young women as peers and leaders among youth participants.
- Use tools to monitor and evaluate the differential impact of programs, initiatives, and services on young women, learn from what did not work in the past, and update activities and implementation approaches based on lessons learned.
- Work in collaboration and partnership with other local organizations, local government authorities, and relevant Ministries to strengthen the sustainability of the project or initiative.
- Elevate the profiles, journeys and successes of young women in digital innovation and increase the representation of young women in the digital innovation ecosystem.
- Use mentors and coaches to highlight role models, strengthen young women's confidence, and build their professional networks and linkages to expanded opportunities.
- Strengthen staff and organizational leadership empathy for young women, thereby deepening understanding of how underlying gender norms have created a lack of confidence, fear to take risks, and struggle to raise their voices.
- Engage families and community members (partners, parents, siblings) to create a sense of self-worth and feeling that they are important among young women, and a sense of security while they take on new challenges.
- Use approaches to implementation that consider the formats, frequencies, and modalities that are accessible and will work best for young women
 - Timing and location of learning sessions, training workshops and events should be considerate of young women's availability, their safety concerns and uphold their rights to safety and autonomy, and accessible by transportation
 - Content should be relevant, youth-friendly, and meet the young women's needs, translated into local language as necessary, encourages practice and application
 - Devices and connectivity should be provided in collaboration with BDS providers and telecommunication companies.

MEET OUR YOUTH RESEARCHERS

A fantastic group of 14 community-based researchers collaborated in participatory action research workshops and led key informant interviews and focus group discussions with community stakeholders. Without their leadership, the findings presented in this report would not have been possible.



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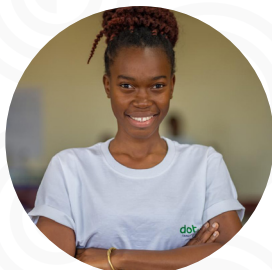
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Morogoro



Norbert Manyaga
Kigoma



Rukia Hamadi
Tanga



Salha Mahamudu
Iringa