



MYANMAR ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ONLINE

REPORT CARD

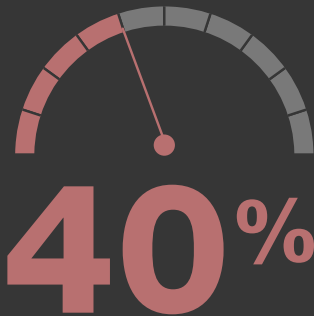


MYANMAR

**Measuring Progress,
Driving Action**

MYANMAR

OVERALL SCORE:



INTERNET ACCESS & WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT



SCORE: 4

Internet access has increased in recent years with the introduction of new telecoms operators and a drop in sim card and mobile data prices. Despite improvements in access and affordability, women are 28% less likely than men to own a mobile phone, the primary means of accessing the internet in Myanmar. While there is no official gender disaggregated data collected by the government to monitor and evaluate the status of gender and ICT in the country, this data has been collected by non-governmental organizations such as LIRNEasia, MIDO and GSMA, and should inform gender responsive ICT policymaking.

AFFORDABILITY



SCORE: 6

Internet affordability has improved in the past few years, and Myanmar has reached the Alliance for Affordable Internet's target of 1 GB of data for under 2% of average income. According to A4AI 2017's data, 1 GB of data is equivalent to 1.47% of average income. Yet still, more than thirty percent of Myanmar's population lives below the poverty line. Affordability and quality of the internet need to be improved for universal access. The country's Universal Service Strategy is being implemented by the regulatory department, but it lacks comprehensive programs targeting women.

DIGITAL SKILLS & EDUCATION



SCORE: 2.5

There are no government programs specifically to build capacity and develop women's digital skills in Myanmar. There are a few initiatives of the Ministry of Education and other local and international organizations to train teachers in ICT for education and to increase women's participation in technology related studies and training. However, less than 15% of secondary schools in the country are considered "Internet ready", according to UNESCO. Although there are some ICT skills building initiatives by private sectors and NGOs such as JICA, Huawei, they should promote more programs targeting primarily to women and girls.



SCORE: **4**

There are several mobile applications developed by NGOs and telecom operators that provide maternal and reproductive health information. However, localization of these applications to ethnic languages is almost non-existent. Availability of local language content is important since the majority of marginalized populations are from ethnic states and regions. Access to relevant online content and services can bring socio-economics benefit for the women living in those areas.



SCORE: **3**

There are no legal mechanisms or guidelines for law enforcement agencies or the judiciary to respond to cases where ICTs are used to commit gender based violence.

In terms of privacy issues, the Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens exists, but it is not comprehensive enough to tackle digital data privacy. The Protection of Violence Against Women law (PoVAW) is still in the draft stage and should include guidelines to address online GBV.

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP: A 5 POINT ACTION PLAN

- 1 INTEGRATE GENDER INTO NATIONAL POLICIES.** The government should take gender into consideration whenever developing or reviewing internet-related legislations and policies in Myanmar, such as the National ICT master plan and e-government master plan etc. Government should work with relevant stakeholders and conduct meaningful public consultation sessions in developing these gender-responsive policies.
- 2 SYSTEMATIC COLLECTION AND PUBLISHING OF GENDER-DISAGGREGATED ICT DATA.** Having gender disaggregated data is crucial for long term monitoring and evaluation of digital gender divide. As a first step, the Telecoms regulatory body should initiate collecting and publishing gender disaggregated ICT user data. Additionally, the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) should include a gender component in collecting and publishing National Population Census in the future.
- 3 IMPLEMENT INCLUSIVE DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAMS.** Government and relevant Ministries should initiate nationwide digital literacy programs which are inclusive across genders, language and ethnic groups, and people with disabilities.
- 4 INCREASE ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY.** To increase access, policies such as Universal Service Fund should be leveraged to implement infrastructure and programs to promote more accessibility for citizens, particularly those at the bottom of the pyramid.
- 5 END GENDER BASED VIOLENCE ONLINE.** Develop a comprehensive legal framework that can protect women's rights and safety online. This should be incorporated in the Protection of Violence Against Women law (PoVAW) that is still in the draft stage and yet to be enacted.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

5 GENDER EQUALITY



The United Nations recently made gender-equitable access to information and communications technologies (ICTs) central to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which set the global development agenda until 2030.

Why? ICTs are powerful. They can help to deliver improved healthcare, quality education for all, financial inclusion, more accountable government, and much more. In adopting the SDGs, all countries have pledged to prioritise universal Internet access, and to use ICTs to empower women.

But much hard work lies ahead if we are to translate this vision into reality. A formidable gender gap in Internet access, digital skills and online rights exists - our Women's Rights Online research shows that in many communities, women are 50% less likely than men to be online and 30-50% less likely

to use the Internet for economic and political empowerment. Women face many barriers - including high costs, lack of know-how, and a scarcity of relevant and empowering content - as well as social and legal obstacles to speaking freely and privately online.

The Web Foundation and partners have prepared these gender audits to help countries assess what they need to do to overcome the gender digital divide. MIDO (Myanmar ICT for Development Organization) has taken the lead, in consultation with other national stakeholders, on identifying concrete steps that government can take in the next year to address the challenges and gaps identified. We hope that this report card and action plan will spark debate and galvanise policy change.

A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY:

We based our scores on 14 simple indicators for which reliable empirical evidence exists, and grading was done in 2018. See the accompanying overview for a description of the indicators and sources used. A full methodology is available on our website.



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