

From October 24 until November 21st 2003, young women from across the globe will connect in an electronic forum to discuss strategies for the integration of gender dimensions and empowerment of young women and girls at all levels of the ICT for development field.

Their goals will be to identify challenges, prioritize needs for support and uncover strategies for building communities of learning that will allow young women to begin or advance their engagement with ICTs.

Background documents and case studies will supplement the discussions by summarizing the involvement of young women and girls in policy processes such as the World Summit on the Information Society, and by examining the existing global and regional communities available to young women in ICT for development.

Discussion Themes

Pre-conference: Introductions (24-31 October)

Participants will be encouraged to introduce themselves, their perspectives on information communication technologies, and their experiences in using ICT for development. Participants will also be presented during this time with a background on the WSIS process and the Action Plan of Youth Creating Digital.

Opportunities.

Week 1: Supporting young women involved in ICT4D policy-making (1 - 7 November)

Discussions will focus on why/how young women choose to (or not to) participate in ICT4D policy processes. Case studies of the WSIS and CSW Youth Caucus, as well the CSW, will be used to explore what effective participation in decision-making means for young women and how it might be fostered.

Week 2: Supporting young women involved in ICT4D projects (8 - 14 November)

Guided by pointed questions, participants will be encouraged to a) share stories of specific ICT4D initiatives led by young women and girls, and b) identify strategies for enabling young women and girls to act as leaders in ICT4D at the grassroots level.

This discussion should touch on the design of support mechanisms (e.g. internships, mentorships, training, recognition, and financing) which take the specific needs of young women into account.

Week 3: Community and conclusions (15 - 21 November)

While there have been many initiatives to empower young women and girls in the field of ICT4D, there has been little visible effort on a continuous basis to enable these young women act as a community of learning, supporting each other's ideas and encouraging the involvement of new girls and young women. This week will help to assess how a

structured community might emerge within the overall YCDO framework, enabling the continuity of young women's work in the field.

For more info and to sign up, please visit:

<http://groups.takingitglobal.org/ycdogender> or email at mandjelkovic@iisd.ca

This online discussion is facilitated by Youth Creating Digital Opportunities (YCDO), a coalition of organizations committed to enabling young people to achieve their full potential in the field of information communication technologies.

The YCDO Community gathers hundreds of young people in a variety of contexts, including the online space at www.ycdo.net