

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS! *G&D*: ICTs

In July 2018, the international journal *Gender & Development* will examine the theme of information and communication technology (ICTs), through the lens of gender equality and women's rights.

G&D is a unique journal, producing content on three themes each year – in March, July and November - to inform and influence development policymakers, practitioners and researchers about placing women's rights and gender equality at the centre of their work. It is published for Oxfam by Routledge/Taylor and Francis. *G&D* provides a forum for the sharing of innovation, good practices and lessons learned from researchers, policymakers, development practitioners and feminist activists, particularly offering space to those from the global South. For more information, visit www.genderanddevelopment.org.

The rapidly-evolving digital landscape is radically transforming the way people around the world access information and services, offering immense potential to individuals, groups and communities for poverty eradication and empowerment, creating new routes for learning, earning, and political activism. SDG 5 recognises the particular empowerment potential of ICTs for gender justice, aiming to 'Enhance the use of ICT to promote the empowerment of women'.

This issue of *Gender & Development* will take a feminist analysis of new, exciting realities, emphasising that technologies themselves are not neutral, offering potential for both positive and negative applications and impact. It will feature grounded case studies from different global South contexts of activism using ICTs for gender equality and the economic, social and political empowerment of women.

ICTs offer massive opportunities for use by activists developing tools to prevent and protect violence, including gender-based violence (GBV), using techniques such as crowdsourcing. ICTs are being used by feminist educators to substitute for missed opportunities for formal education for girls who cannot make it regularly to school and have to quit too early; they can be used with adults to foster critical consciousness and provide opportunities for learning and understanding, sharing market knowledge to make their businesses thrive. Coalitions for social and political justice can form across traditional boundaries, creating communities and bridging gaps, between people from different identities and locations.

However, the issue will also caution against thinking ICTs are the latest in the long line of 'magic bullets' for development and social justice. Access to mobile services or the Internet is an issue for millions, with reasons ranging from unaffordability and lack of infrastructure, gendered differences in usage, to state restrictions of freedom of information. And the barriers go beyond access to active use: research suggests women are less likely than men to use the Internet to increase their income or participate in public life. There is a risk of growing poverty and inequality from this 'digital divide'.

Critically, ICTs also have a 'dark side': unrestricted freedom of speech poses risks in a context of discrimination and growing fundamentalisms, and ICTs are being used to foster misinformation, violence and hate. Women human rights defenders are targeted for new forms of hate crimes online.

In our data-driven world, these factors have significant implications for who is represented, and whose voices are being heard.

This issue hopes to explore these and other areas, to inform and empower the work of development and humanitarian practitioners and policymakers supporting gender justice and women's rights. If you are an activist, practitioner, or policymaker with experience to share, please send a paragraph outlining your proposed idea for the issue. If you are a researcher who has focused on such work, we would like to hear from you too.

Ideas for articles include the following, but please suggest other ideas if they do not appear on the list!

- **Women's rights organisations using ICTs to advance their aims: examples of innovative initiatives.**
- **Ending Violence Against Women and Girls– does technology help or hinder? Grounded case studies of experiences in different contexts.**
- **Using technology for learning: case studies of how it's helping educate girls who aren't in school, and adult women learners.**
- **Technology and women's economic empowerment: examples of how women are using phones and online in business and enterprise.**
- **Social media misogyny or new routes to challenge norms: is technology enabling new forms of dialogue? Grounded research giving examples of the potential, and the risks, of social media for advancing women's rights and gender equality.**
- **Power and voice: how representative is data? Evidence on the extent to which digital inequalities trace existing social inequalities and impact on "data driven" decisions.**
- **What role can different actors: development organisations, the private sector or governments play in challenging the digital divide?**
- **How can development organisations use ICTs to enable gender equality learning into their work and institutions? Examples of e-learning, forms of participation or feedback.**

Please send a paragraph outlining your proposed idea for an article for this issue, in an email (no attachments please) to csweetman@oxfam.org.uk as soon as possible and by 30 September 2017.

This issue will be commissioned for a deadline of 10 October 2017. Commissioned articles (of around 6,000 words) will need to be completed for a deadline of 10 January 2018. Guidelines for contributors can be found at www.genderanddevelopment.org