

Dynamic Coalition on Gender and Internet Governance

2023 Annual Report

The Dynamic Coalition on Gender and Internet Governance (DC-Gender) aims to ensure that gender perspective is included in key debates around internet governance, such as privacy, access, freedom of expression, content regulation, among others. DC-Gender seeks to promote women and marginalised genders' visibility at the IGF and related fora, and to promote more effective linkages between local, regional and global initiatives on gender and information society.

Work undertaken in 2023

Within the IGF

DC-Gender's session at the IGF was strongly intertwined with the 2023 theme "The Internet We Want: Empowering All People". We organised a panel discussion titled, "Disability, Gender and Digital Self-Determination: What's The Missing Link?" The session centered intersectional feminist perspectives of women, queer and trans persons with disabilities and experts working in the intersections of disability rights, gender, accessibility and technology. We explored the idea of self-determination, agency and autonomy in the age of datafication through the lens of gender and disabilities. The panel: 1) delved into the ability of women, gender and sexual minorities living with disabilities to digitally self-determine themselves using current/emerging digital technologies, based on lived realities of individuals from different geographies and contexts; 2) deepened understandings of the need and potential to work with persons with disabilities (PWDs) in developing new and emerging technologies; 3) explored a bridge between access points and 'pain-points', and thought of inclusive ways of determining the self in new digital life spaces, going beyond accessibility and also thinking about personhood, agency, choice, autonomy, rights and freedoms in digital spaces for PWDs; 4) explored collaborative and

learning opportunities to make digital self-determination actionable and a reality for women, queer and trans PWDs.

Aligning with Commitments 1 and 5 of the Global Digital Compact to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to leave no one behind and place women and girls at the centre, DC-Gender contributed our learnings and experiences at the regional and global IGFs to rethinking how we can:

1. Ensure that the voices, needs and realities of women and gender minorities from the Global South – including PWDs — can be meaningfully represented in global and regional digital rights conversations;
2. Reimagine digital inclusion centering women, girls and marginalised genders, and PWDs;
3. Promote gender parity by addressing gender discrimination and gender-based violence in digital spaces; and
4. Address issues around digital inclusion, digital accessibility, and the digital gender divide in the Global South.

Beyond the IGF

Prioritising “The Internet We Want: Empowering All People”, DC-Gender continued our work on bridging the digital literacy and skill gap by conducting capacity building workshops among grassroots communities of women, girls, and gender minorities in India. These are communities who are disproportionately affected by the digital divide, be it lack of access to digital devices, digital literacy and knowledge, or facing tech-facilitated gender-based violence (TfGBV). These issues are further exacerbated by patriarchal norms that hinder women and gender minorities’ free expression in and full access to online spaces. Addressing their needs, we conducted in-person, online and hybrid workshops on digital literacy, rights, security, TfGBV response, advocacy, and digital storytelling.

We conducted a series of four studios on Disability and Digital Self-Determination that brought together persons with disabilities; technologists, designers and developers; disability rights activists; researchers; academics and civil society members. The studios delved into experiences and understandings of the relationships between our lives and the technologies that we use, especially in the context of our growing digital footprints, through the lens of disability, gender, and intersectional identities.

We organised a Gender and Internet Governance Exchange (gigX) workshop with civil society organisations working in areas of gender and sexuality, SRHR, digital rights, and policy to enable cross-learning and collaboration between these different groups. The intent was to demystify the theory, politics and practices of internet governance in an accessible, jargon-free manner.

Our first-of-its-kind multilingual omni-channel helpline TechSakhi that provides digital information to women and gender minorities, provided solutions on digital security and TfGBV in Hindi, Marathi, and Bangla.

Priorities for 2024

We will continue our work at the intersections of gender and technology, taking into account the changing needs and realities of women and other marginalised genders, aligning with one of the IGF 2024 themes: Advancing human rights and inclusion in the digital age. We aim to build capacities of and reach many more women, girls and gender minorities from diverse demographics, amplify their voices in national, regional and global internet rights spaces, and improve gender equality and inclusion within internet governance spaces.