

- Session Title:

**Seed Alliance and Gender Inclusion: Towards Greater Female Leadership in Internet
(Open Forum)**

Date: Monday 18 December

Time: 9:00 am to 10:00 am

Room: XXVI

- **Session Organizer:**

The SEED ALLIANCE www.seedalliance.net ; AFRINIC www.afrinic.net; APNIC www.apnic.net
and LACNIC www.lacnic.net



- **Chair/Moderator:**

Carolina Caeiro



- **Rapporteur/Note taker:**

Kenvon Swift

- **List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:**

<https://igf2017.sched.com/event/CSD6/seed-alliance-gender-inclusion-towards-greater-female-leadership-in-internet-of19?iframe=no&w=100%25&sidebar=yes&bg=no>

Carolina Caeiro: Programme Coordinator of FRIDA


Duncan Macintosh: CEO of APNIC Foundation



Vymala Thuron: Head of External Relations of AFRINIC


- Key Issues raised:

It was observed that female leadership in ICT was challenging for many reasons among them we have Educational, mentality and cultural barriers. 

Gender Reporting

- Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session:    **30**

- Estimate the overall number of women present at the session:    **15**

- To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment? 

We as the 3 Regional Internet Registry under the Seed Alliance umbrella, strongly believe that we should include parity and equality of gender in the ICT sector and the session was about the inclusiveness of gender in the ICT

- If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion:

About the RIRs and the Seed Alliance

A brief introduction about the five RIRs was given together with the Seed Alliance mandate, a collaborative partnership between the FIRE Africa, FRIDA and ISIF Asia Grants and Awards programs and the Alliance's various partners and sponsors. Together, these programs support innovation on Internet development across the global south. Since it started in 2012, the program partners have supported 162 projects from 60 economies with over US\$ 3.8 Million of funding allocated in Grants and Awards throughout Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, helping to strengthen and promote the Information Society within these regions.

FRIDA:

Moderating the session, **Carolina Caeiro**, Coordinator of Development Projects at the Latin American and Caribbean Internet Addresses Registry (LACNIC), briefly introduced the three funding programmes that comprised the Seed Alliance: ISIF ASIA, FIRE and FRIDA. Throughout the Seed Alliance's work, Caeiro observed that female leadership in ICT was challenging. 40% of funded projects were led by women. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) supports the 2018 cycle of project financing, and specifically targets projects focusing on gender inclusion and leadership.

APNIC FOUNDATION and ISIF-Asia

Duncan Macintosh, CEO of the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC) Foundation, outlined APNIC's activities in gender. Macintosh relayed APNIC's long-standing commitment to gender activities, including fellowship programmes with gender criteria in the selection process, women in ICT sessions at APNIC meetings, and diversity in APNIC's workforce. He asserted that APNIC was determined to make progress. In the Asia-Pacific region, there was not a lot of progress in gender issues; the landscape is heterogeneous. Macintosh highlighted that in 2012 ISIF Asia started with a project in the Philippines on safe motherhood and texting for information, and then another project in that country on accessing medical information, particularly for pregnant women. In Pakistan, he stated that there was a project on healthcare for medical workers that treated pregnant women. Macintosh reflected on the type of programmes in which ISIF Asia should invest. He mentioned that while the Foundation's work was focused on women, all projects and activities were run by men. He emphasised that the identification of gender-inclusive projects run by women is a challenge.

FIRE_AFRICA

Vymala Thuron, Head of External Relations at the Africa Network Information Centre (AFRINIC), spoke about AFRINIC's focus on gender inclusion in ICT. Thuron affirmed that her CEO was pro-gender and underscored that it was important for leaders to believe in gender and parity. Since 2012, AFRINIC has been managing gender-inclusive projects and has pursued bringing women on board to fully manage projects since 2016. Thuron briefly presented two projects promoting women in networks, and introduced a female FIRE awardee whose project focused on a mobile, solar-powered classroom that breaks gender stereotypes in reaching marginalised communities. Thuron also mentioned that the concept of female mentorship was included in the Africa Summit, and that AFRINIC also promoted female participation in its meetings in its fellowship selection process. She stressed that male leaders needed to be on board with gender inclusion for efforts to be effective.

Caeiro presented LACNIC's working on gender. She indicated that recently a woman was appointed to the LACNIC Board for the first time. She emphasised that LACNIC includes women in its events, including efforts for women to present papers and foster female mentorship. Regarding FRIDA, Caeiro suggested that trends in Latin America and the Caribbean might be common to those in the Asia Pacific and Africa, and that more was required to close gender gap. She referenced a 2016 GSMA report which deduced that there was insufficient skills support for women to reap the benefits of the Internet. She stated that the gender gap extended to women's involvement not only in consuming technology but producing it as well. FRIDA examines the funding landscape and women leaders. It was observed that few women were seen investing in technology projects. In 2017, FRIDA began the Women in Technology Awards, which included projects stimulating women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and coding. Caeiro referred to a session from the previous day where a presenter remarked that 'women collectives are building a feminine Internet not only from a position of assistance but also

from a position of creativity.' She insisted that gender-inclusive activities must go beyond gender violence online and consider how women can genderise the Internet.

Joana Varon, Executive Director, Coding Rights in Brazil, explained that her organisation started 2 ½ years ago in the field of Internet Governance, digital rights. In a male-dominated field, Varon wanted to establish an organisation composed by women and centred on policymaking with gender perspectives in mind. She has championed projects tackling online gender-based violence in Brazil from a feminist perspective. She indicated that debate on privacy and digital security provided an avenue for the feminist agenda but progress is needed. She gave an exposé of a research and storytelling on platform called 'Chupadados', in which profiling and unsolicited digital marketing reinforced anti-feminists narratives and stereotypes. Varon stated that if women developed apps there would be different perspectives and ads online.

Asia Kamukama, Founder of the Mobile Solar Foundation in Uganda, elaborated on her mobile solar-powered vehicle that goes to remote areas to promote literacy. Kamukama's mission is to take technology and literacy to remote areas in Uganda, which includes penetrating the country's vast rural landscape. Kamukama puts a lot of emphasis on girls and women, especially teenage girls. She stated that there were cultural stereotypes to break down, including views that women should be in the kitchen, and should not drive, operate machines or even turn on the radio. She stated that her work involved convincing parents that technology access and use would not 'spoil' their girls. She also indicated that teaching the fundamentals of mobile money was a contemporary issue for women to become effective income earners and entrepreneurs.

Carlos Rey-Moreno, Local Access Networks Project Coordinator at the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), addressed the relation between community networks and gender. Rey-Moreno spoke about Libre Router – a project that allows communities to deploy ground communications infrastructure despite of training. He elaborated on components of an IDRC-funded project he is working on, namely i. profiling and understanding existing community networks and their social and gender impact; and ii. analysing six community networks to understand barriers and opportunities for female participation including cultural nuances. Reinforcing Varon's points, Rey-Moreno underlined that by demonstrating how women can break barriers, more women can become inspired and involved in technology.