EQUALS at 10

A Decade of Partnership, Impact and Action to Close the Gender Digital Divide



GSMA™ UNU International Trade Centre ITU UN WOMEN

Joint Foreword from EQUALS Board of Principals

Ten years ago, EQUALS was launched with a clear conviction: the digital future must be shaped by women and girls, not only for them.

Since 2016, EQUALS has brought together partners from across sectors and regions to advance digital gender equality through advocacy, collaboration, visibility and action. Over the past decade, the partnership has helped spotlight women and girls in technology, strengthen digital skills and leadership, and keep the gender digital divide high on the global agenda.

As EQUALS marks its 10th anniversary, we celebrate the partners, initiatives, award winners and communities that have shaped its journey. But this milestone is also a moment to look ahead. Digital transformation is accelerating, and persistent inequalities continue to limit the opportunities of too many women and girls. The next decade must therefore be one of renewed ambition, stronger collaboration and concrete impact.

Through EQUALS 2.0 and the 2035 Operational Strategy, the partnership has an opportunity to build on its legacy and rally collective action towards empowering 100 million women and girls by 2035.

As EQUALS co-founders, we reaffirm our shared commitment to a digital future where every woman and girl can participate, lead and thrive.



Doreen Bodgan-Martin

Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union



Vivek Badrinath

Director General of GSMA



Sima Sami Bahous

Executive Director of UN Women



Pamela Coke-Hamilton

Executive Director of the International Trade Centre



Professor Tshilidzi Marwala

Rector of the United Nations University

21 September 2026

EQUALS
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the following individuals who have shaped the partnership and contributed to its success over the years:

Iffat Rose Gill - **Code to Change**

Vanessa Dreier, Nina Brandner and Elisabeth von Glahn - **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit** (GIZ)

Jane Jamieson - **Digital Opportunity Trust** – (DOT)

Julie Linn Teigland, Lea Sophie Gill, Pascal Guera, Laura Turkinton, Abigail Gooch and Michelle Settecase - **Ernst and Young** (EY)

Mats Granryd, Claire Sibthorpe, Belinda Exelby, Tamara Dancheva, Mariana Lopez and Pippa McDougall - **GSMA**

Natalia Vicente - **Global Satellite Operators Association** (GSOA)

Joyce Dogniez and Marian Pletosu - **Internet Society** (ISOC)

Arancha González, Vanessa Erogbogbo, Judith Fessehaie, Terfa Ashwe, Robert Skidmore, Natalya Kozlenkova, James Howe, Kritee Sharma, Edison Yap, Ana Vasudevan and Philippa McDougall – **International Trade Centre** (ITC)

Houlin Zhao, Ursula Wynhoven, Sylvia Poll, Rui Wan, Maud Aba'a, Xinyue Song and the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) – **International Telecommunication Union** (ITU)

Professor Moon Choi - **Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology** (KAIST)

George Anthony Giannoumis and Helene Rogne - **Oslo Metropolitan University** (OsloMet)

Justine Sass and Elspeth McOmish – **UNESCO**

Araba Sey, Michael Best and Jaimee Stuart - **United Nations University** (UNU)

Phumzille Mlambo-Ndcuka, Anna Falth, Diana Rusu, Jayathma Wickramanayake and Hillary Bakrie - **UN Women**

Gitanjali Meher Swamy - **University of California, Berkeley**

Christopher Yoo - **University of Pennsylvania**

Lindsey Nefesh-Clarke and Daisy Wachira - **Women's worldwide web** (W4)

Jensine Larsen - **World Vision**

EQUALS

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The draft, design and coordination of this document was done by the EQUALS Hub.

HISTORY OF EQUALS

The EQUALS Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age is a committed group of corporate leaders, governments, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, academic institutions, NGOs and community groups around the world dedicated to promoting gender balance in the technology sector.

EQUALS began in 2014 as a collaboration between the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UN Women. The GEM-TECH Awards, as EQUALS was initially called, sought to "create a platform for advancing women's meaningful engagement with ICTs and their role as decision-makers and producers within this sector" by recognizing organizations that worked towards increasing women and girls' presence in digital spaces, facilitating their access to new technologies and encouraging them to consider studies and careers in ICT.

In line with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), GEM-TECH donors realized that the programme needed a longer-term framework, not only to recognize trailblazers working to bring gender equality to the digital sector, but also to promote and provide institutional support for such work.

In 2016, Global System for Mobile Communications Association, (GSMA), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and United Nations University (UNU) joined ITU and UN Women, and the five founding partners officially launched EQUALS. The following year, the steering committee was formalized to provide EQUALS partners with strategic leadership. In 2018, the G20 recognized the EQUALS Global Partnership, underscoring its importance to achieving a sustainable future for all.

EQUALS 2.0: RENEWING THE PARTNERSHIP FOR GREATER IMPACT

In 2024, the Principals of the EQUALS co-founders came together to assess the progress of the partnership and define its future direction. Building on nearly a decade of collaboration, evidence generation, advocacy and programme delivery, they agreed on a renewed strategic framework to strengthen EQUALS' impact and position the partnership to respond to an increasingly complex and rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Launched in 2025, EQUALS 2.0 marked a significant evolution for the partnership. To better respond to emerging opportunities and challenges, EQUALS transitioned from a coalition-based structure to a more agile workstream-driven model. This new approach enables partners to collaborate across themes, mobilize expertise more effectively and align efforts with emerging priorities related to digital inclusion, leadership, skills and emerging technologies.

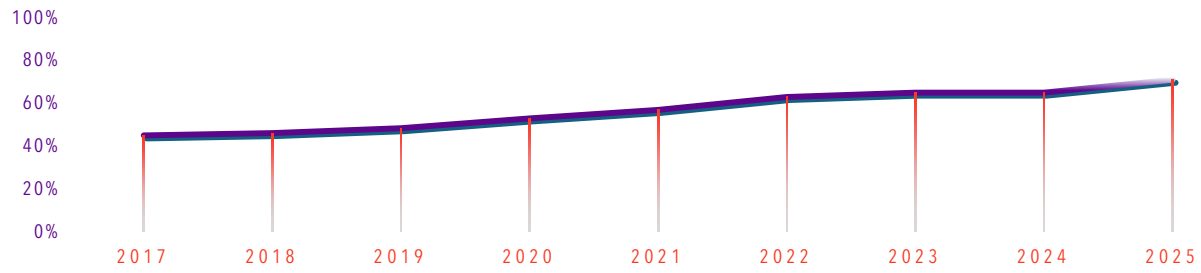
The evolution of EQUALS comes at a critical moment. Since the partnership was launched in 2016, important progress has been achieved in expanding digital connectivity worldwide and narrowing gender digital gaps, yet significant disparities persist, leaving millions of women and girls excluded from the opportunities and benefits of the digital transformation. According to ITU, global Internet penetration for women increased from 44.9% in 2016 to 71% in 2025 and over the same period, the relative Internet gender gap narrowed from 12.1% to 7.8%.[1].

[1] International Telecommunication Union, Measuring Digital Development: Facts and Figures 2025 (Geneva, 2025); see also International Telecommunication Union, ICT Facts and Figures 2017: Global Revisions Series (Geneva, 2017)

Yet progress remains uneven, with 2.2 billion people still offline globally and approximately 280 million fewer women using the Internet than men.[2] Similarly, GSMA data shows that the mobile internet gender gap in low- and middle-income countries decreased from 25% in 2017 to 12% in 2025.[3] However, around 810 million women are still not using mobile internet, limiting their ability to access education, economic opportunities and digital services[4]. The economic case for closing the gender digital gaps is compelling: UN Women estimates that closing the digital gender gap could contribute up to USD 1.5 trillion to global GDP by 2030.[5]

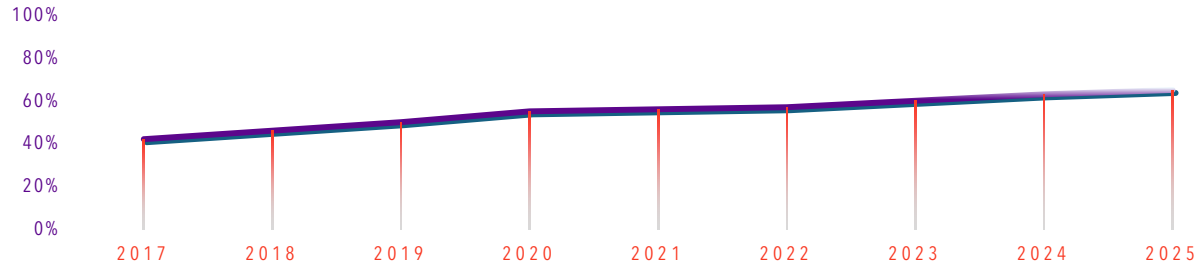
These trends demonstrate both the progress achieved over the past decade and the scale of the challenge that remains, reinforcing the need for a stronger and more coordinated EQUALS partnership.

Global internet penetration for women



Source: ITU

Women using mobile internet in low- and middle-income countries



Source: GSMA

[2] International Telecommunication Union, Measuring Digital Development: Facts and Figures 2025 (Geneva, 2025)

[3] GSM Association, The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2026 (London, 2026); see also GSM Association, The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2018 (London, 2018))

[4] GSM Association, The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2026 (London, 2026)

[5] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2025 (New York, 2025)

EQUALS ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES

From 2016 to 2026, EQUALS grew into a network of more than 100 partners, organized under four coalitions: Access, Skills, Leadership and Research

The work of the partnership was overseen by a Steering Committee made up of the founding members; the Coalition leads and funding partners. The Steering Committee is coordinated by the EQUALS Hub which is located in the ITU.

Since its establishment in 2016, this structure enabled the EQUALS Global Partnership to rapidly gain recognition on the global stage. As a dynamic initiative dedicated to bridging the digital gender divide, EQUALS successfully engaged key stakeholders across multiple sectors. With a robust network of partners representing all six regions of the world, the partnership was able to address gender digital inequality comprehensively and effectively. Guided by its mission and vision, this structure laid the foundation for numerous achievements and milestones, establishing EQUALS as a leading force in promoting gender equality in technology. The following sections highlight a selection of these accomplishments, demonstrating the partnership's ongoing commitment and impact.

1. EQUALS Coalitions

Until 2025, EQUALS advanced digital gender equality through four coalitions focused on access, skills, leadership and research. The following sections highlight their key achievements and results.

ACCESS COALITION

GOAL: Reduce the gender gap in internet access by 50% by 2030

18 PARTNERS

Coalition leaders (2021 - 2025):

GSMA, Global Satellite Operator's Association (GSOA), Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT)



DELIVERABLES

- **African Girls Can Code**
- **Digital Literacy Pilot Programs for Women and Girls**
- **Access Learning Sessions**
- **Access Learning Labs**
- **Capacity Building**
- **Publication:**
  - EQUALS Access Coalition Report, 2018
  - EQUALS Access Coalition Report, 2019

MILESTONES

Mapping and identifying regions with limited access to technology.

- **7 Access Learning Sessions**
- **228+ registered participants**
- **from 66+ countries**

SKILLS COALITION

GOAL: Provide access to gender transformative digital skills education and capacity building for one million women and girls by 2030

44 PARTNERS

Coalition leaders (2022 - 2025):

GSMA, ITU

International Telecommunication Union, GSMA

MILESTONES

Developing and launching digital skills training programs

EQUIPPING 100 000+
girls and women with essential digital skills through the EQUALS Her Digital Skills initiative

DELIVERABLES

- **EQUALS Her Digital Skills**
- **#eSkills4Girls FundAccess Learning Sessions**
- **Digital Skills Projects: NANUM Connected Women, Atingi E-learning Platform.**
- **Publication:**
  - I'd Blush if I Could: closing gender divides in digital skills through education, 2019
  - Towards an equal future: Reimagining girls' education through STEM, 2020



LEADERSHIP COALITION

GOAL: Ensure 30% of tech leaders are women by 2030

21 PARTNERS

Coalition leaders (2022 - 2025):

International Trade Centre, UN WOMEN, EY

International Trade Centre, UN Women, Ernst & Young

DELIVERABLES

- **Talking Tech Series**
- **Gender Equitable Investment in Tech (GEIT) Project**
- **Leadership Webinars**
- **Online courses: Management Skills for Women Entrepreneurs in Tech**
- **Publication:**
  - Leadership Coalition Progress Report, 2018
  - Perceptions of power Championing Female Leadership in Tech, 2020



MILESTONES

Mapping and identifying regions with limited access to technology.

180+ Talking Tech videos

Since 2023, 4 Leadership Coalition Webinars attended by 190+ participants

115+ WOMEN enrolled in the online course on Management Skills for Women Entrepreneurs in Tech

RESEARCH COALITION

GOAL: Provides the coalitions with empirical evidence to ensure relevance and efficiency in their activities.

43 PARTNERS

Coalition leaders (2022 - 2025):

Georgia Institute of Technology, Korean Advanced Institute for Science & Technology (KAIST)

DELIVERABLES

Publications:

- Taking stock: Data and evidence on gender equality in digital access, skills and leadership, 2019
- Sex-disaggregated ICT data in Africa, 2022
- EQUALS Research Report 2025 – Evidence to Impact: Advancing Gender Empowerment in the Digital Age

MILESTONES

10 REPORTS[6]**: Latest one EQUALS Research Report 2025 – Evidence to Impact: Advancing Gender Empowerment in the Digital Age**

Publishing research findings and recommendations for interventions

Using research data to guide policy changes and program implementations



2. EQUALS Projects – A Global Initiative with Local Impact

Since its inception, the EQUALS Global Partnership has supported and facilitated a variety of projects aimed at closing the digital gender gap. These projects span multiple areas, from increasing access to technology for women to enhancing their digital skills and promoting leadership and entrepreneurship in the tech industry. Through these efforts, EQUALS has driven significant progress in promoting gender equality in technology. The following sections highlight a selection of these impactful projects, showcasing our ongoing commitment and the tangible impact we are making globally.

The ITU implementing arm for these projects has been the ITU Development Bureau (BDT).

[6] Additional publications can be found throughout the report.

Projects POWERED[7] by EQUALS:

EQUALS Gender Equitable Investment in Tech (GEIT) 2018 - 2020

GOAL: Reduce the gender investment gap in the tech sector by equipping investors with evidence-based guidance and best practices to advance gender-equitable capital allocation across global technology ecosystems.

High-impact panels, roundtables, and publications, including:

- **Women 2.0 – UN Women WE EMPOWER panel: Accessing Investors and Capital During COVID-19 panel, 2020**
- **EQUALS-UNGC-Dalberg Roundtable: An Investor Roadmap for Making Technology Investments Gender Equitable, 2019**
- **Investment Forum Investor Breakfast at WIF Conference, 2018**
- **EQUALS-PRI Fall Asset Owner Roundtable at Annual PRI Conference, 2018**

LEAD/IMPLEMENTER PARTNERS

Accelerate Her, African Development Bank, EY, GSMA, IoTask, ITU BDT, ITC, She Loves Tech, UN Women, and Women 2.0

EQUALS #eSkills4Girls Fund 2019 – 2021

GOAL: Expand gender-responsive digital skills training for women and girls in low- and middle-income countries, addressing the digital gender divide through capacity building, local leadership, and inclusive digital participation.

BENEFICIARIES

27 ORGANIZATIONS, EMPOWERING 15 779 WOMEN

COUNTRIES

15+ COUNTRIES ACROSS AFRICA, ASIA, LATIN AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN

DONORS & LEAD/IMPLEMENTER PARNTERS

Implemented by giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Cape Town Science Center

[7] EQUALS projects: initiated by EQUALS coalition members, focused on EQUALS goals and measured for impact for EQUALS, executed and implemented by EQUALS coalition members under the EQUALS brand first, open for EQUALS members contribution via the commitment form, endorsed by relevant coalition leadership unless they solicit external funding.

EQUALS HER DIGITAL SKILLS 2020 – Ongoing

GOAL: Provide free, gender-transformative foundational IT skills training, e-skills badges, and e-mentoring for 1 million women and girls by 2026.
Find out more

Overarching Objective: Expand the STEM/STEAM talent pipeline for girls and young women, increasing access to employment and internship opportunities in technology.

Three complementary projects:

Workshops Hands-on workshops introducing advanced digital skills alongside technical knowledge for careers in technology (for women and girls aged 10–35).

Badges Free gender-transformative digital skills self-paced training with Digital Badge certifications to support further education and access to ICT employment.

e-Mentoring Connecting women aspiring to develop a career in tech with tech and mobile industry professionals to foster career awareness, engagement, and leadership pathways.

BENEFICIARIES

350 000+ GIRLS AND WOMEN

2 000+ MENTORS & MENTEES

320+ WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED GLOBALLY

DONORS & APPROX. FUNDING TOTAL (USD 2.0M)

W4, EIF, GiZ, ITU, EY, Qualcomm, Verizon

COUNTRIES

60+ ACROSS AFRICA, AMERICAS, ASIA AND THE PACIFIC & EUROPE

LEAD/IMPLEMENTER PARNTERS

PUBLICATION

5[8] **REPORTS**

LEAD/IMPLEMENTER PARNTERS

GSMA, ITU BDT, W4, EY



EQUALS Her Digital Skills Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, 2025



EQUALS Her Digital Skills Workshop in Cebu, Philippines, 2023

READ THE FULL STORY

"During this programme, I learned more about who I am, what I can and cannot do, developing confidence, self-appreciation, putting pride aside, being confident about what I'm capable of doing and not having self-doubt."

- Mentee - Nompendulo Pani

"It gives these already talented young women in technology, the 'secret sauce' that will ensure success."

- Mentor - Victoria Maria Gonzalez

[8] EQUALS Gender Inclusivity Index Key Findings report, Advancing Digital Competence for Women and Girls: An Equity and Gender Perspective, Gender Transformative Digital Skills Education Framework (GTDSE).

EQUALS TALKING TECH SERIES 2020-2022

GOAL: Inspire and empower girls and young women to pursue ICT studies and careers through one-on-one online interviews with women in technology, where role models share their career journeys and advice while creating opportunities for leadership, visibility and networking and highlighting technology's role in advancing sustainable development.

WATCH THE INTERVIEW SERIES

"I'm always being curious. Even if it's something that isn't necessarily directly connected to a particular area of technology that you're in, you'll never know the opportunities and the possibilities that exist."

- Susanne Tedrick,
Technical Trainer, Microsoft

Impact Story:

Inspired and empowered by her experience as an interviewer for Talking Tech, a former participant has launched her very own podcast where she is interviewing people in the Space sector.

LEAD/IMPLEMENTER PARNTERS

ITU NYC Office, UNICC, UN Youth Office

180+ PUBLISHED INTERVIEWS

400+ GIRLS AND WOMEN MATCHED

193 COUNTRIES

ITU-EIF – Tech as a driver of Women's Economic Opportunity 2020 – 2023

GOAL: Empower women entrepreneurs in Least Developed Countries with the digital skills and tools needed to access markets, grow their businesses and benefit from the digital economy.

ACHIEVEMENTS

86 WORKSHOPS AND OTHER TRAINING SESSIONS

1 SELF-PACED COURSES AT ITU ACADEMY

2570 BENEFICIARIES

3[9] PUBLICATIONS

3 COUNTRIES (BURUNDI, ETHIOPIA, HAITI)

DONORS & APPROXIMATE FUNDING
ENHANCED INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK & ITU **(USD 2.0M)**

"The project helped me to be visible digitally as well as to be prepared for what is needed to be visible in the international market. We are marketing on Instagram and Facebook and are now about to launch our website"

- Rahwa, Young Ethiopian entrepreneur'

[9] Handbook on mainstreaming gender in digital policies-ITU; Gender Equality in Digital Policy in Ethiopia; Gender Equality in Digital Policy in Burundi



WATCH THE FULL VIDEO

LEAD/IMPLEMENTER PARNTER

ITU BDT

EQUALS EU Project - Europe's Regional Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age AGE 2021 – 2023

Objective: Promote gender equity through capacity building and creating smart, sustainable, and inclusive innovation ecosystems in local communities and cities across Europe and the Global North and South.

PARTNERS

19 INSTITUTIONS ACROSS[10] 29 EU & ASSOCIATED COUNTRIES & 9 GLOBAL PARTNERS

HACKATHONS

19 399 PARTICIPANTS

PUBLICATIONS

2 REPORTS ACROSS 1 ROADMAP FOR THE GENDER EQUITY TOOLS FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION

IMPACT

DEVELOP 20+ START-UPS LEAD BY WOMEN

3-WEEK INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMME IN RIGA (LATVIA), GENEVA (SWITZERLAND) AND VALENCIA (SPAIN) IN SUMMER 2023

[10] EQUALS-EU Consortium Partners: OsloMet (Norway), Stockholm University (Sweden), Missions Publiques (France), Global Universal Design Commission Europe (Norway), GSMA (UK), All Digital (Belgium), Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs (Ukraine), Geneva Graduate Institute (Switzerland), Institute of Economics of the Latvian Academy of Sciences (Latvia), University of Valencia (Spain), University of Cologne (Germany), Middle East Technical University (Turkey), University of Haifa (Israel), BLITAB Technology (Austria), Havelsan (Turkey), KMOP (Greece), Intersection Centre for Science and Innovation (Serbia), United Nations University (Macao), and KAIST (South Korea).

DONORS & APPROXIMATE FUNDING
EUROPEAN COMISSION **(USD 1.2M)**

LEAD/IMPLEMENTER PARNTERS

GSMA

Oslo Metropolitan University (Research Coalition former co-leader) with a consortium of partners including GSMA and Graduate Institute Geneva

> *"The opportunity to meet and network with women across the globe, all committed to creating change by tackling gender exclusion was truly phenomenal."*
>
> - Clementina Aina, Tech Start-Up Founder, 6C's Skills Exchange, London, representing #Haven at the final week of EQUALS-EU Summer School.







READ THE FULL STORY

EQUALS Champions Programme 2023 - 2025

GOAL: Strengthen the visibility, business and digital skills, mentoring and networks of women leaders and entrepreneurs in technology.

11 MENTOR-MENTEES PAIRS FORMED

5 REGIONS REPRESENTED

AFRICA, ASIA, THE AMERICAS, EUROPE & THE MIDDLE EAST

PARTNERS

GSMA · ITU · International Trade Centre · UN Women · EY · Internet Society · Code to Change Program Your Future · W4.org · planetmogul entrepreneurship + innovation · Vijay Computer Academy

LEAD/IMPLEMENTER PARNTERS

Code to Change Program Your Future

Code to Change

GSMA, ITU BDT, ITC, UN Women, UNU, EY, Internet Society (ISOC), Code to Change, W4, Planet Mogul, Vijay Computer Academy.

AI Skills Accelerator for Girls 2024 – Ongoing

GOAL: Equipping 1000 young women with the necessary digital, ethical and entrepreneurial skills to leverage and apply AI in their own context.

TRAINING

20+ IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS

BENEFICIARIES

1000+ GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN TRAINED

9 COUNTRIES

EGYPT, INDIA, JORDAN, KAZAKHSTAN, KENYA, MALTA, PARAGUAY, UZBEKISTAN, MOZAMBIQUE

LEAD/IMPLEMENTER PARNTERS: ITU BDT, EY

DONOR & APPROXIMATE FUNDING (USD 408 500)

EY

"The workshop was truly gratifying and extremely helpful. It will foster significant projects for women, as well as understanding and support that could make a real impact in Paraguay,"

- Lorena Jiménez, Engineering student from Paraguay

Projects SUPPORTED[11] by EQUALS:



DOT – Rwanda Digital Skills for Business 2021 - Ongoing: In Rwanda, the Digital Skills for Business program trained young women entrepreneurs, resulting in significant increases in ICT skills, smartphone ownership, and mobile money usage

Find out more



TrickleUp & AVSI Foundation – Uganda EQUALS project 2021 - 2022: The project model uses animation videos to support the development of women's digital skills - translated into the local languages of the audiences.

Find out more



Natview – Nigeria Fasaha 4.0: equipped young women in conflict-affected areas with essential digital skills, leading to increased employment opportunities. Two months after project completion, 29% of the 180 participants secured formal employment, paid internships, or freelancing opportunities due to the skills gained from the program.

Find out more

[11] Member projects: initiated by EQUALS members, aligned to EQUALS goals, not measured for impact for EQUALS, executed by EQUALS coalition members under their brand first (or for priority), open for support or input from other EQUALS members.

3. EQUALS – A platform for high level engagement, advocacy and awareness raising

EQUALS in Tech Awards

Established in 2014 by ITU and UN Women as the GEM-TECH Awards and subsequently renamed the EQUALS in Tech Awards, the initiative has grown into a cornerstone of the EQUALS Global Partnership. The Awards celebrate individuals, organizations and initiatives that are using technology to expand opportunities, strengthen participation and improve outcomes for women and girls around the world. In the past 9 years, Awards were given in the following categories **Access, Skills, Leadership in Tech, Leadership in SMEs, Research and Special Recognition Partner Award**

2500+
NOMINATIONS RECEIVED

12
CELEBRATIONS

7
COUNTRIES OF CELEBRATION

(South Korea, USA, Thailand, Switzerland, Germany, Poland, Spain)

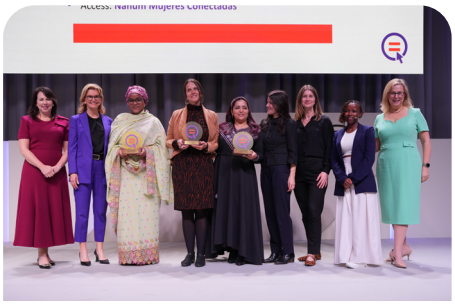
73
WINNERS



GEM Tech Awards
2016, Bangkok, Thailand



EiTA Awards Ceremony
2019, Berlin, Germany



EiTA Awards at MWC-26
2026, Barcelona, Spain

Leveraging EQUALS Partners Platform

Since its establishment in 2016, the EQUALS Global Partnership has leveraged key global platforms of its partners to convene stakeholders, showcase results, and advance advocacy on gender equality in digital transformation.

At Mobile World Congress (MWC), EQUALS has regularly engaged with the private sector. This includes the launch of the renewed EQUALS mission and vision at MWC Barcelona 2025 and the organization of an EQUALS session and the EQUALS in Tech Awards ceremony in 2026, where global initiatives advancing gender equality in technology are recognized.



EQUALS at MWC Barcelona, Spain (2026)



EQUALS at MWC Barcelona, Spain (2025)

At the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), EQUALS has organized and contributed to multiple side events across editions. At CSW67, in 2023, EQUALS supported sessions on bridging the gender digital divide through policy action and digital skills for women and girls, alongside partner-led events. At CSW70 in 2026, EQUALS hosted a flagship side event on women's participation in digital public life, convening governments, UN entities, and private sector actors.



EQUALS at CSW70, New York (2026)



EQUALS at CSW70, New York (2026)

At the WSIS Forum, EQUALS has also contributed to the official programme. At the WSIS+20 High-Level Event in 2025, EQUALS organized a session on building a gender-inclusive digital future, launched the EQUALS Research Report, and introduced the Her Digital Skills programme. EQUALS continues to deliver dedicated sessions within the WSIS.



EQUALS at WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025, Geneva, Switzerland

At the AI for Good Global Summit 2026, EQUALS launched its first EQUALS Dialogues, bringing together stakeholders for two dedicated sessions on women's participation in AI, trade and inclusive digital business, and on skills, careers and inclusive AI futures. The engagement also included a partner networking gathering to strengthen collaboration and advance collective action for gender equality in the digital world.



EQUALS Dialogue at AI for Good Global Summit
2026, Geneva, Switzerland



EQUALS Get together at AI for Good Global Summit
2026, Geneva, Switzerland

EQUALS 2035: THE NEXT CHAPTER

As EQUALS enters its second decade, the partnership builds on ten years of progress in advancing digital inclusion, skills, leadership and evidence-based action. Yet significant challenges remain. Beyond access, the next frontier lies in ensuring that women and girls are fully represented as innovators, leaders, researchers, entrepreneurs and decision-makers shaping the digital future. While progress has been made, women remain underrepresented in many of the fields driving technological transformation.

Today, women represent only **35%** of STEM graduates globally, approximately **31%** of researchers worldwide, and an estimated **22-30%** of the global AI workforce.[12]

The EQUALS Gender Inclusivity Index pilot with 16 mobile network operators found that 93% of participating organizations had gender equality goals and metrics in place, but only one reported conducting an independent evaluation of its efforts, highlighting the need to strengthen measurement and accountability mechanisms.[13] These challenges will help shape EQUALS' work towards 2035.

[12] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Towards gender equality in scientific organizations: assessment and recommendations (Paris, 2026); see also World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report (Geneva, 2025)

[13] EQUALS Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age, EQUALS Gender Inclusivity Index Pilot Study and Strategic Horizon Report (Geneva, 2025)

1. EQUALS 2.0 Overall objective: Achieve Digital Gender Equality by 2035

From the achievements and lessons learned in the last 10 years, the overall goal of EQUALS is to achieve Digital Gender Equality by 2035. The partnership focuses on thematic workstreams, each with a two-year timeframe. After each two-year timeframe, the Board will advise other areas of interest based on evolving needs and feedback from the EQUALS membership.

With the new vision and mission successfully launched during the Mobile World Congress (MWC) in Barcelona in early 2025, EQUALS reaffirms its renewed purpose:

"EQUALS empowers women and girls to become key drivers and active participants in the digital economy and society."

Its new vision further strengthens this commitment:

"We envision a future where digital transformation for social change, education, and business is driven by women and girls, bringing prosperity for all."

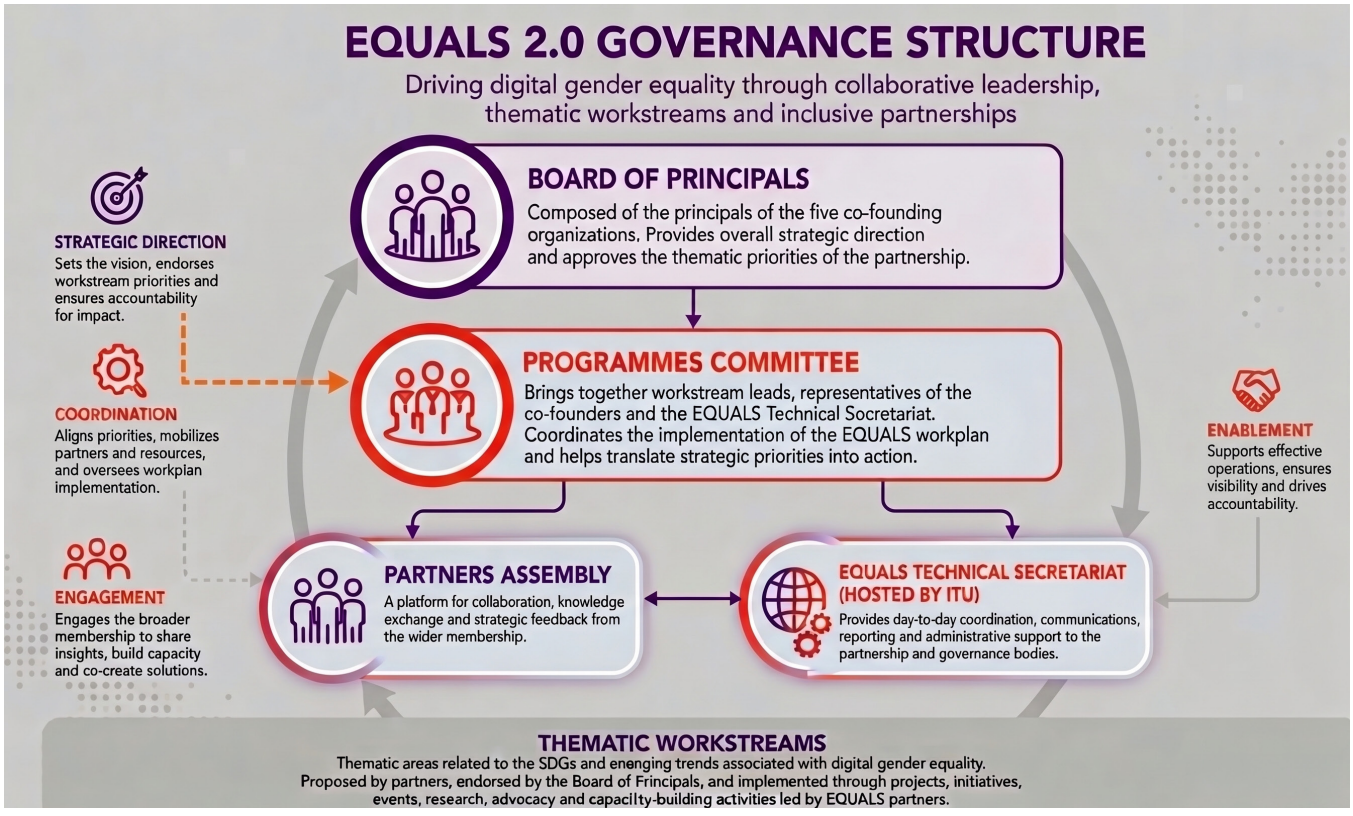
2. New structure and governance

EQUALS 2.0 now focuses on thematic workstreams to support digital gender equality instead of coalitions. Workstreams are thematic areas related to the SDGs and emerging trends associated with digital gender equality. Proposed by partners and endorsed by the EQUALS Board of Principals, they are designed to be cross-cutting and relevant across multiple sectors and stakeholder groups.



EQUALS 2026 Board of Principals meeting
Geneva, Switzerland

Workstreams are implemented through projects, initiatives, events, research, advocacy and capacity-building activities led by EQUALS partners. To support this renewed approach, EQUALS has adopted a streamlined governance structure designed to strengthen strategic leadership, partner engagement and accountability. The Board of Principals, composed of the principals of the five co-founding organizations, provides overall strategic direction and approves



the thematic priorities of the partnership. The Programmes Committee, bringing together workstream leads, representatives of the co-founders and the EQUALS Technical Secretariat, coordinates the implementation of the EQUALS workplan and helps translate strategic priorities into action. The broader Partners Assembly provides a platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange and strategic feedback from the wider membership.



EQUALS 2025 Annual Partner Assembly

Day-to-day coordination, communications and reporting are supported by the EQUALS Technical Secretariat, hosted by ITU. The governance structure is illustrated below. Under the new governance structure, four Board of Principals meetings were held in person, in hybrid format and online, with strong engagement from the Principals. The first Annual Partners Assembly took place on 5 December 2025.

We are currently operating through the following workstreams:

1. Emerging Tech for Inclusion:

This workstream will promote equitable access to and benefits from emerging technologies (AI, climate tech, etc.) encompassing interventions that promote accessibility, affordability and meaningful and fair use.

29% of female-dominated occupations are exposed to GenAI, compared with **16%** of male-dominated occupations,

(International Labour Organization Research Brief, Gen AI, occupational segregation and gender equality in the world of work, 2026)

2. Digital Skills & Leadership Pathways:

This workstream will focus on developing and implementing initiatives that equip women and girls with digital skills, as well as provide scalable pathways for leadership roles in the digital economy (in the public and private sector).

For every **100** young men with digital skills, only **65** young women have them, in low- and middle-income nations,

(UNICEF Global Report, Bridging the Digital Divide: Challenges and an Urgent Call for Action for Equitable Digital Skills Development, 2019).

Women occupy a mere **20%** of ICT Minister positions globally

(ITU Gender Dashboard, April 2026 data update)

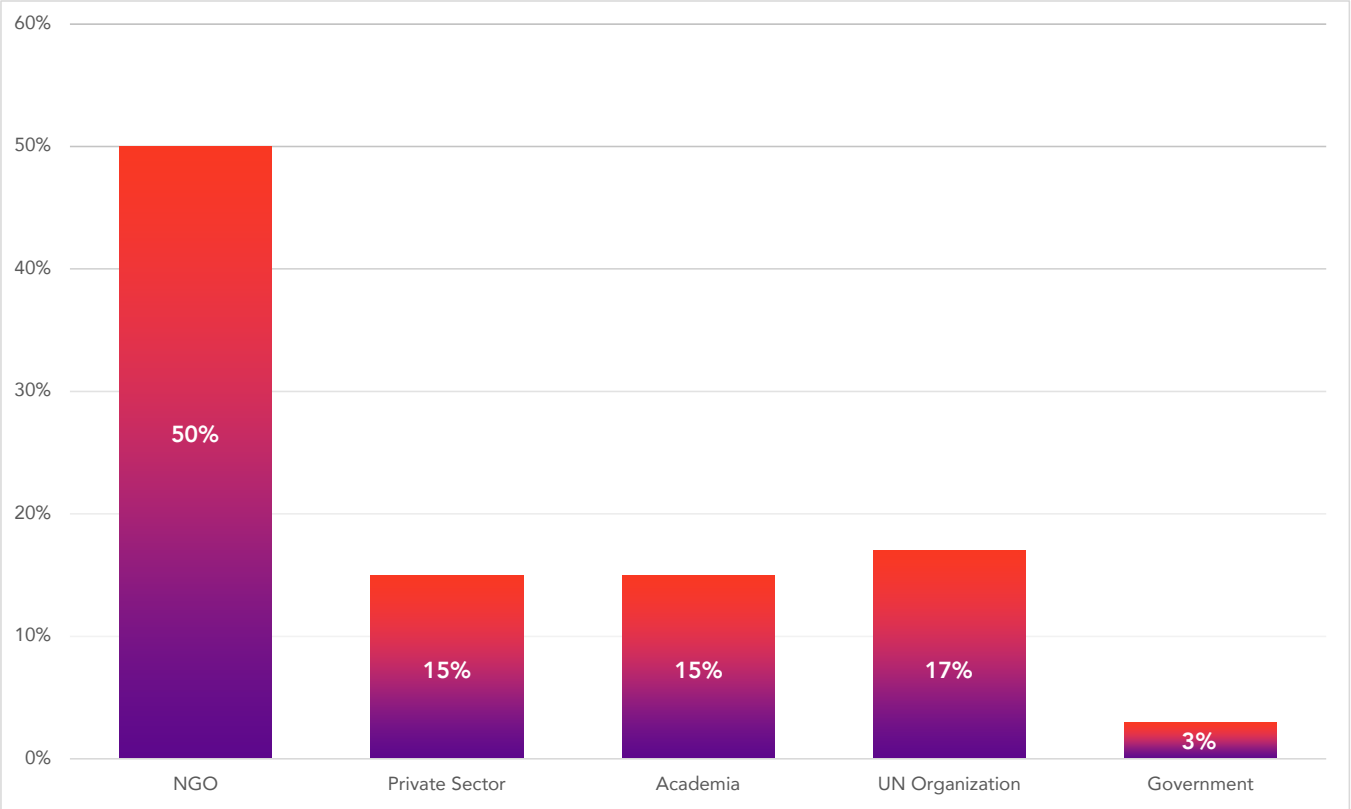
3. Safe and Inclusive Digital Spaces:

This workstream will promote safe, inclusive and empowering digital spaces, addressing technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, online harassment, exclusion and other digital harms that limit women's and girls' rights, leadership and participation.

16% to **58%** of women have experienced online violence, with many cases going unreported.

(UN Women Policy Statement, Call to Action: UNiTE to end digital violence against all women and girls, 2025)

3. EQUALS Partnership Today



EQUALS now has more than **50 active partner organizations** operating around the world, from global to grassroots level. Its distinctive collaborative approach, extensive network, and dedication to promoting gender equality in the technology sector make EQUALS an effective catalyst to drive impactful change.

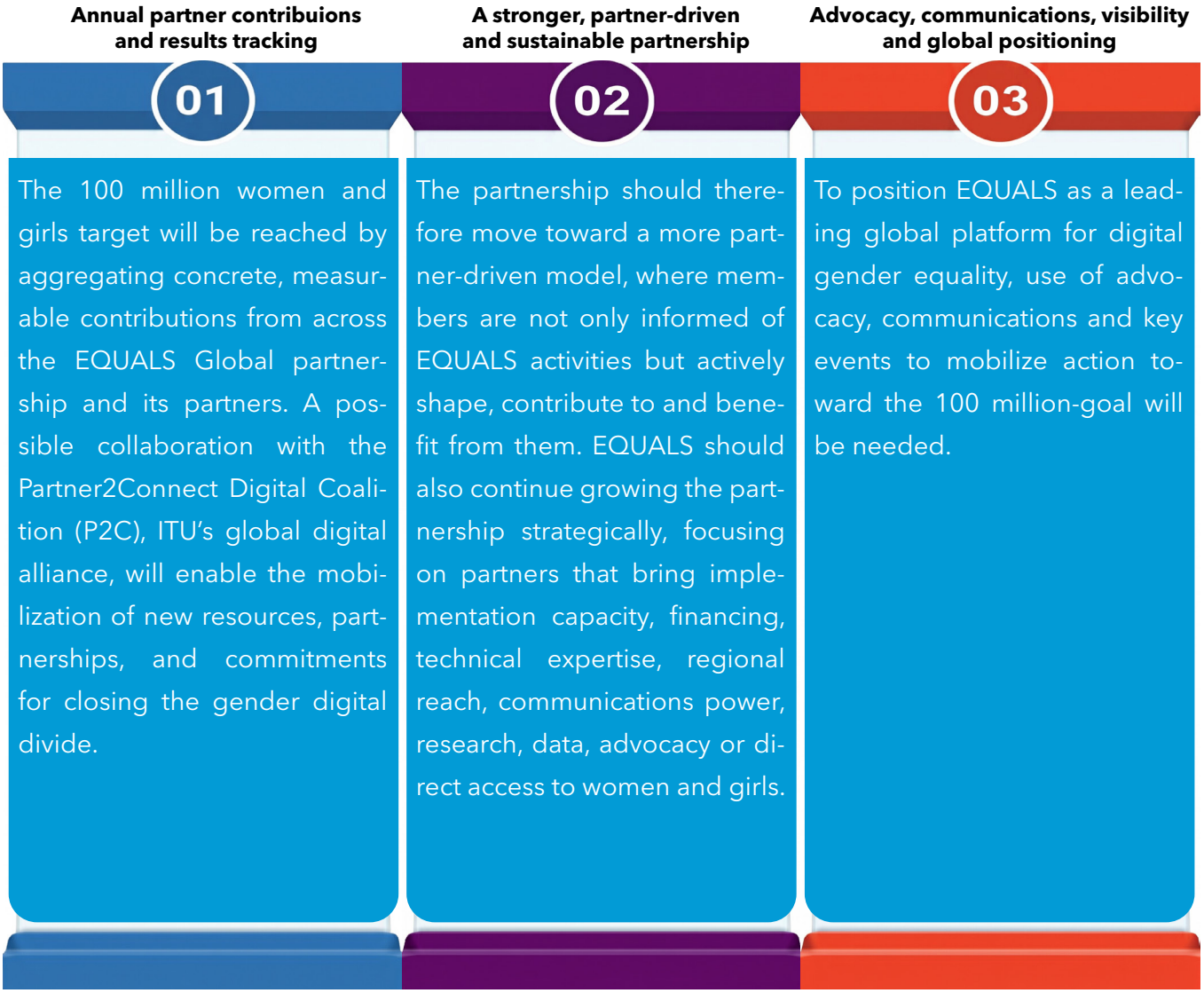
4. From the new mission and vision to implementation

EQUALS needs to now translate that ambition of the new vision and mission into a measurable operational framework.

EQUALS is a global multistakeholder partnership, not a single implementing agency. Its strength lies in mobilizing, connecting, amplifying and tracking the collective contribution of partners advancing digital gender equality.

EQUALS will provide the framework through which partner contributions, workstream activities, existing initiatives, funded projects and visibility platforms can collectively contribute to the 2035 goal to reach 100 million women and girls.

The proposed framework is structured around three pillars:



LOOKING AHEAD

The next decade represents an opportunity not only to accelerate progress, but also to redefine what inclusive digital transformation can achieve. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, generating evidence, supporting innovation and mobilizing collective action, EQUALS will continue serving as a global platform for collaboration and impact.

The story of EQUALS is still being written. The achievements of the past ten years demonstrate what can be accomplished through partnership. Building on this foundation, EQUALS and its partners will continue working towards a future where women and girls everywhere have the opportunity to access, use, lead and shape digital technologies for the benefit of all.

