

Call for Papers

Track 02. Women Empowerment and Gender Justice: Social Harmony and/or Social Change?

Track chairs/associate editors

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Overview of the research area

Efforts to address deep-rooted structures of women disempowerment and gender injustice have benefitted greatly from the tools, spaces and relationship modalities that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) offers. Since women empowerment has been positively linked to community development, a focus on including a gender justice perspective to ICT initiatives can thus also become an important constituting element of national and global development programs. The field of Gender and ICT4D is however still in its infancy both in terms of theory and methodology development. This track aims to bring together researchers, both experienced and novice that have been working in this field and want to share their experiences, theoretical reflections and methodological experiments.

Work in the field of Gender and ICT4D can be characterised as either confirmatory, reformatory or transformatory in terms of intended research impact. This distinction however does not predicate a choice of research methods per se; analytical, descriptive and critical-emancipatory methods and techniques can be used in relation to any of these three categories. Because of the normative focus on women empowerment and gender justice, research has to be linked to a vision of emancipatory social and personal change, practically, theoretically and methodologically.

In relation to the conference theme of "ICTs for promoting social harmony: towards a sustainable information society" the focus on women empowerment and gender justice brings up deep questioning around morality, theory, methodology and capacity building. Social Harmony understood as a balanced social order can mask deep rooted structures of privilege and exclusion. When Social Harmony can be brought into dialogue with a social analysis that acknowledges power differentials as complex systems of privilege and exclusion, a diversity of human aspirations for personal and social emancipation can be accommodated.

Because gender identity is so deeply ingrained in human beings and in society, a sustainable information society grounded in a striving towards Social Harmony and Social Justice, would need to create and protect the space for gender discrimination of any kind to be investigated and addressed. This track endeavours to encourage conceptual and practical work that can contribute to such an endeavour.

Exemplar topics and types of contributions looked-for

1. In-depth investigation of cases where ICT has contributed to women empowerment and/or amelioration of existing gender injustice and discrimination:
 - a. Description of the purposes for which ICT was used in these cases and of the way in which users' intentions effected ICT use in process and outcome.
 - b. Analysis of the social dynamics that could have influenced the ways in which ICT has been appropriated and used.
2. In-depth investigation of how the use of ICT has contributed to the aggravation of existing gender injustice and women dis-empowerment:
 - a. Description of the purposes for which ICT was used in these cases and of the way in which users' intentions effected ICT use in process and outcome.
 - b. Analysis of the social dynamics that could have influenced the ways in which ICT has been appropriated.
3. Description and analysis how gender and ICT initiatives or interventions have had influence on broader issues of social, economic or cultural impact.



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4. What would be the most strategic research questions in the striving for gender equality in the Information/Knowledge Society?
5. What kind of new research themes, dimensions and strategies would ICT4D as a discipline generate when the values of gender equality and sustainable development would be integrated in its research quests?
6. What kind of research is needed to create new knowledge around the interface of gender, sustainable development and ICT4D?
7. How can we infuse the field of ICT4D with the debates on the meanings, strategies, goals and dimensions of development, foregrounding gender and sustainability, that are currently particularly vivid in the South?

Important dates

Paper submission: November 15, 2016
Acceptance notification: January 31, 2017
Resubmission: February 28, 2017
Conference: May 22-24, 2017

Conference co-chairs

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Information on other tracks: 2017.ifipwg94.net