

## IT for Change Annual Report

2021 - 2022





IT for Change 2022

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# About the Organization

Dominant approaches to digital technologies are steeped in ideologies of market fundamentalism, and have displaced the cornerstone ethics of participation, social justice, and gender equality.

At IT for Change, we believe that progressive development sector actors must come together to influence the techno-social structures that are redefining our societies. We seek to build bridges across different sectors to strive towards a digital society that is equitable.

Our work, straddling Data and Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Tech and Digital Economy, the Digital Public Sphere, Feminist Digitality, Education and Technology, and more, pushes the boundaries of theory and practice to explore new horizons for development justice.



#### **MISSION**

Democratizing the control and use of digital technologies so that individuals and communities are able to use them freely towards their empowerment





#### **VISION**

A society in which digital technologies contribute to social justice and equality

#### **VALUES**

Equity, Social Justice, Gender Equality, and Democracy



#### **STRATEGIES**

- Partnering with local communities
- Forging local and global networks
- Undertaking research
- Engaging with policy spaces
- Creating new institutional capacity

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# A Note from the Team

As a yearly ritual and a critical organizational public function, the development and publication of the annual report is always a time of reflection here at IT for Change.

It provides the necessary room to step back and take stock of our journey so far, to assess the progress we have made during another year at the front-lines of digital justice, and importantly, to evaluate and confront with bare honesty all that remains to be done. While Covid-19 is a continuous presence in the backdrop, the world has cautiously emerged from the chokehold of the pandemic. From weathering the second and third waves of the virus to returning to on-site work, in-person events, field work, and even global travel and networking, the year has been challenging and hopeful for the world at large, and the IT for Change team in many ways.

We have continued to further the digital justice agenda at global and local levels, throwing ourselves into an ever-growing roster of research projects and initiatives, engaging with emerging focus areas, and forging new partnerships, while strengthening old ones. We continue to grow our impact in the developmental sector by influencing techno-social changes and policymaking in our thematic areas of work, moving towards supporting inclusive, egalitarian, and just policy frameworks — from the grassroots to the highest echelons of international rulemaking. An uncompromising standpoint, based on intersectional feminist values and substantive equality, has always informed this tapestry of work.

This year, we have been part of key flashpoint victories, campaigns that we led or threw our weight behind. We have also seen the rewards of years of work galvanize into global agendas, gaining wider traction. Across these endeavors, we recognize that our work strengthens and is strengthened by the energies of a larger set of actors, feeding into instances of impact.

We capture in our annual report for the year 2021-22, the high notes of these efforts. We have distilled innumerable hours of knowledge production, field work, community engagement, and local-to-global advocacy undertaken by the 50+ members of the IT for Change team into a short reflective narrative. Whether you are an old friend of the organization, or a new partner, we invite you to engage with our report and get to know us and our work better.

We commit to continue our efforts — with an eye on the future — building our internal capacity to further our vision and strong legacy. Some of the main planks of our work in the coming year include continuing the important fight against Big Tech, co-shaping a global movement to democratize global digital cooperation, incubating a viable communitarian use case for AI in education, developing legal-institutional responses to gendered hate speech, and reclaiming labor rights in the digital paradigm.

In Solidarity,
The IT for Change Team

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## Our Impact

# At the Forefront of the Battle against the Transnational Digital Corporation

As the pandemic laid bare the excesses of digital capitalism and the attendant regulatory deficits that entrench the status quo, a notable discursive shift has occurred in the public consciousness. The consensus is that *Big Tech simply can't be allowed to get away any longer.* In this regard, a growing wave of regulation that seeks to make corporations more accountable is only a welcome first step. What is missing from this conversation, and indeed, rendered invisible, is the ever-increasing influence of the private sector in rule-making in the digital space. This has the disastrous consequence of eroding public interest and undercutting economic justice.

The need of the hour is to take on the question of what kind of governance can set right this hollowing out of publicness. This is why our research and advocacy focus on driving a stake through the heart of unchecked market power by unraveling the assetization of data — a priceless social resource of our time. We have gone on to bat for distributive justice in the digital economy, calling out the reversal of labor gains and the need for updated standards for decent work.



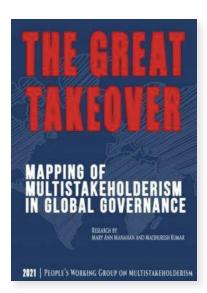
# This year, we worked to stop a Big Tech takeover in its tracks. Twice

We pushed back against the privatization of India's digital finance backbone through a campaign with the State Bank of India's employees' union, and UNI Global, a global union federation for the skills and services sectors, against the proposal of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to create New Umbrella Entities (NUEs). This plan would have allowed private entities to create parallel and for-profit digital payment platforms, to the detriment of the existing public payment standard. Following our letter and widespread media coverage in August 2021, the RBI put its plan on hold. Read our campaign letter, covered by nine media outlets.

We prevented Meta from gaining backdoor access to WhatsApp user data by joining the efforts of a global civil society campaign against WhatsApp's proposed policy in April 2O21. The move would have given Meta, as the parent company, unparalleled control over the user data of millions who use WhatsApp, especially in the Global South. Facing pressure from policymakers, civil society, and users at large, Meta rolled back this decision.

# We took the fight against multistakeholderism to Davos and beyond

Through the Just Net Coalition (JNC) and the People's Working Group on Multistakeholderism (PWGM), we made several efforts to challenge the brazen hold of Big Tech over global digital governance, all in the name of stakeholderism, a devious ploy to dislodge democratic modalities of rulemaking. To counter the glib narratives of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on industry 4.0, we also analyzed Big Tech's takeover of digital governance in a book published by the PWGM and released in January 2022 at an event attended by Jeremy Corbyn.



View this powerful video statement (at 00:52 mins) made by us at the UN General Assembly's third thematic consultation on the 'Our Common Agenda' report.



# Our consistent call for platform accountability on online sexism and misogyny is gathering global momentum

Our joint submission with InternetLab was the only civil society submission cited by the UN Special Rapporteur (SR) on the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression in her July 2021 report to point to the failure of social media behemoths to address online misogyny and cultures of gender-based violence with "the urgency, seriousness and resources it requires".

We co-organized a panel with the UN SR's office at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), December 2021, bringing to the table representatives from the Government of Mexico, the Council of Europe, and the public policy wing of Meta, for a dialogue on the duty of care vested in platform companies to tackle sexist hate.



We have been one of the few civil society organizations straddling engagement with private platform companies (in particular, Meta) for a techno-design overhaul and advocacy in key UN forums — consultations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on Big Tech's human rights obligations and Generation Equality Action Coalitions of UN Women.

Using the tools of quantitative and qualitative research about women's online participation, we have built a formidable body of evidence that informs our unequivocal demand for a binding multilateral framework as a basis to regulate social media and revitalize digital democracy and the feminist public sphere.

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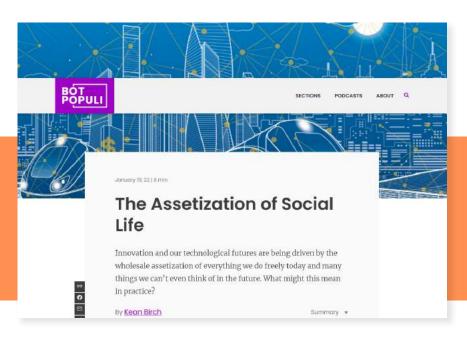
# And...we're sharpening the critique on Big Tech issues with a clear agenda to decolonize the digital

A first-of-its-kind media initiative from IT for Change, we launched our monthly newsletter, DataSyn, dedicated to providing concise and relevant analysis on Big Tech issues. We went live in October 2021, with a debut issue that looked into the Chinese response to Big Tech control, and haven't looked back since. Over the months, we have covered a host of issues including Big Tech's growing hold over internet infrastructure, fintech, food systems and digitalization, and labor in the digital economy. Our year-end issue featuring 21 key voices reflecting on the struggles against Big Tech in 2021 is a feat that we are particularly proud of. DataSyn's readership spans academics, policy professionals, and activists. We have been able to instrumentalize the essays from DataSyn toward various advocacy initiatives.

#### FYI:

The piece 'Assetization of Social Life' by scholar Kean Birch, commissioned as part of efforts around the WEF annual forum in January 2022, has been our most-read DataSyn piece to date.

# DATASYN AT A GLANCE 6 issues 30+ contributors 2700 loyal readers 50% opening rate 10+ countries reached 9,225+ new readers to Bot Populi.



# Shaping Public Digitalization Pathways for the South

An extractive digital economy has created a gaping data-divide among countries, manifesting and deepening global inequality. With our institutions and systems steadily getting datafied, public infrastructure and services like education and health are rapidly becoming integrated with transnational digital value chains. It is more important than ever before for people and nations of the Global South to reclaim their data and digital infrastructure. This calls for checking geoeconomic and geopolitical power in the digital space, and relocalizing the gains of the digital in a sustainable and equitable manner. The de facto control of the technology corporation over people's destinies must make way for bold public policy models.

Our collective future hinges on an expanded ideal of human rights — one that places human agency and collective democratic will in relation to the digital condition. This year we have made important strides in building the alternative narrative to the mainstream; collaborating with civil society actors, researchers, and trade union activists; and contributing to public policy processes. From working to preserve policy space and data sovereignty in digital trade agreements, furthering workers' rights over the data they produce, to promoting conceptual frameworks on the data commons, and equipping governments from the Global South in their policy development on data and AI, we have used various routes to shape a new institutional vision of digitality.



# We enshrined 'community data' as a concept in discourse, policy, and practice

We have been successful in seeding the idea of community data, where data rights are vested in communities, as well as a data semi commons approach that deters free riding by Big Tech, in academic discourse and policy debate. Through our research, as well as at various national and global forums, we have evangelized thinking around this with academics and researchers. Through involvement in Government of India committees, we have been able to push for its inclusion in the Indian draft law framework on non-personal data.

We have also embarked on models that can demonstrate ideas for alternative data and community-led models in practice. With one state government in India, we are exploring alternative public-supported platform models. We have been working with SEWA Cooperative Federation and other organizations to assess how public policy frameworks can be developed through platform cooperativism and alternative platform economy employment models, based on worker collectives.



In January 2022, we also entered into an exciting partnership with the Department of Education, Government of Kerala. We are building a community AI model for learning to deploy alternative techno-design built on decentralization of data architectures and federated decision-making to ensure local-level control over the generation of data-based intelligence and its deployment in decision-making.

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# We furthered the digital industrialization agenda for the Global South

Our longstanding contributions to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the South Centre have been crucial in putting the agenda of digital sovereignty front and center in global policy discussions. At the 15th quadrennial session, the Ministerial Declaration of G-77 group of developing countries invoked the idea of 'digital industrialization', a concept we have pioneered. Another key agenda-setting opportunity has emerged through our participation in the UN Secretary General's 10-member expert group on technology facilitation. We worked to ensure that the notion of 'global digital public goods' received its due in the UN Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum in May 2022.

Read our policy briefs prepared for this forum, expected to form a part of the official background report to the UN STI Forum.

# We provided the compass for economic justice in Al governance dialogues.

In August 2021, the Paris Peace Forum, an initiative of the French government, invited us to join a working group with leading academics, technologists, civil society members, and activists from across the world to develop a roadmap to bridge North-South concerns in AI governance. As part of the writing committee, we drafted a working paper, catalyzing a rich debate and building consensus around the need for a new AI governance approach to tackle not only the issues of AI bias and discrimination, but also the skewed distribution of data and AI resources in the global economy. Engage with the report's key findings.





# We mainstreamed the idea of workers' economic claims over their data

We have consistently argued that workers' data rights must be seen to include not only freedom from dataveillance and exploitative forms of algorithmic management, but also their claims over the data value they generate in the laboring process. Once a fringe concept, this idea of the economic value of workers' data, and indeed, the right of workers to the same, is now increasingly gaining wider acceptance. We are proud to have worked with major union federations, including the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and Public Services International (PSI) in this regard, and happy to report that the International Labour Organization (ILO) governing body in 2021 recognized the concept of workers' data rights, and has tabled the issue to be discussed in the 2022 International Labour Conference.



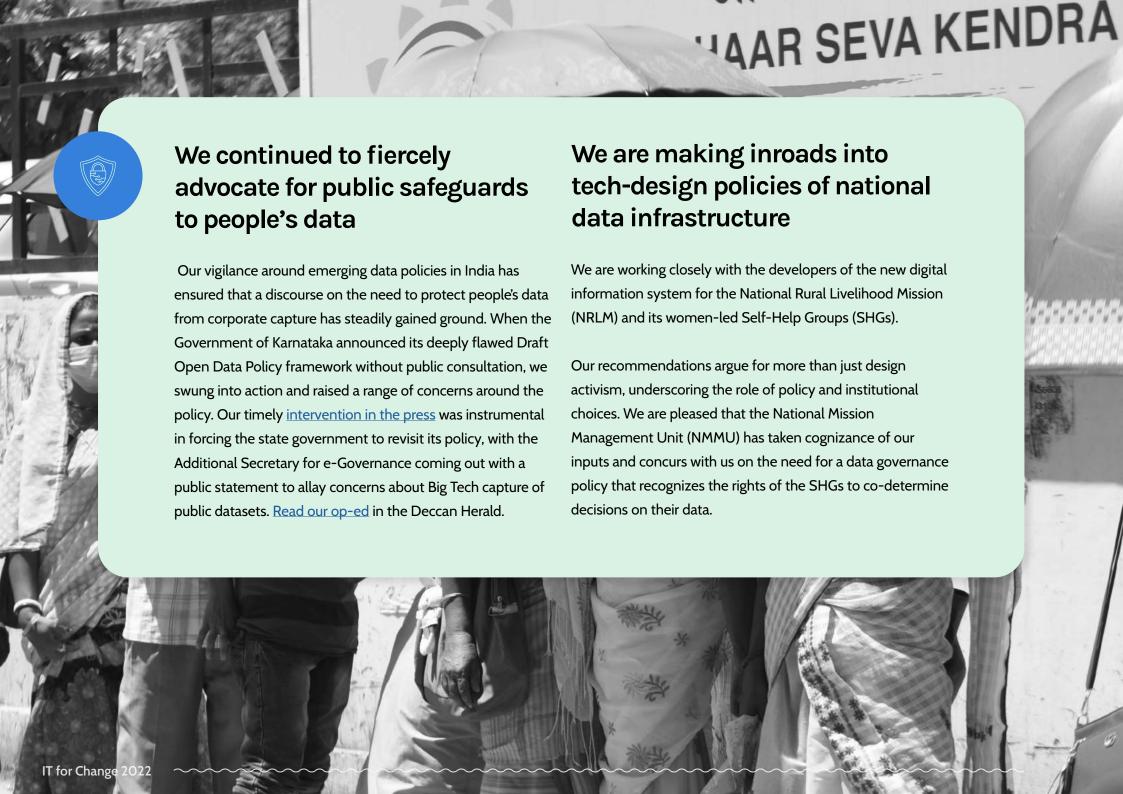
## We co-created a data justice agenda for labor

We mobilized different constituencies committed to labor issues in the digital economy to come together on a pan-Indian civil society (CS) platform, paving the way for a coordinated civil society response to India's evolving policy context.

Read our issue brief that analyzed the impact of the pandemic and associated lockdowns on platform workers in India.

Check out 'A Civil Society Agenda for E-Shram', which outlines a broad set of recommendations to strengthen the design and implementation of the online social security system for workers.

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# An Important Bridge between Digital Justice and Development Justice

The political economy of development in the 21st century is predicated on the trajectory of digitalization — the manner in which institutions can evolve to meet the imperatives for an equitable and just digital paradigm. Big Tech and its mutations in the form of Big Agri, Big Pharma, and Big Retail divest people of their control over material and knowledge resources, undercutting local economic autonomy and shrinking the policy space for developing countries to reimagine the digital society and economy. Indeed, there can be no development justice without digital justice. Well aware of this connection, social movements and global civil society at the forefront of various struggles have begun expanding their repertoire to incorporate the digital sub-text

in their critiques and strategies. We are humbled that many organizations making this shift have turned to us with the faith that we can bring synergies by making the relevant data and digital connections to the work they do. These partnerships have matured into working groups, activist teach-ins, practitioner institutes, and programming roadmaps focusing on priority actions for a fair, just, and equitable global digital order.

We have also had the opportunity to advise and input into the organizational thinking, agenda, and programming priorities of philanthropic foundations, as well as academic networks of the North working in solidarity with the South.



# We worked with global civil society to connect the development and digital justice dots

Forging strong partnerships with global organizations and social movements in health, food sovereignty, biodiversity, education, global trade, and finance, we have challenged the neo-colonial logics of data extractivism in international policy debates, bridging digital rights activism with development justice advocacy.



- The health data governance principles that we developed with Transform Health, a global initiative that works to further the universal health goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are a pathbreaking contribution to the data governance debates at the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Our work with the ETC group has deepened the conversations on food, data, and justice, pushing against the takeover of agriculture value chains by large transnational corporations, and arguing for a people-led digitalization.
- Network has given us the opportunity to provide strategic inputs on how Digital Sequence Information (DSI) flows need to be governed in the public interest, in the age of synthetic biology. The DSI question is a cross-cutting issue of pertinence to global governance fora such as the Biodiversity Convention, the WHO's work on genomic sequencing, the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) mandate on the Seed Treaty, and more.

- We have been chosen by Oxfam to lead a critical study on mapping investments by the International Finance Corporation, a sister organization of the World Bank, in India's burgeoning ed-tech sector, a study that we hope will pave the way for a sustained campaign in India.
- with the Our World is Not for Sale (OWINFS) network, co-leading the civil society offensive to expose the machinations of the big powers on the e-commerce agenda, in the lead-up to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference-12. Data governance issues we have held are not to be conflated with trade rules.
- Mechanism on Financing for
  Development at the Friends
  of Monterrey retreat and UN
  Financing for Development process
  has been a vital step to open the
  conversation on financing of digital
  infrastructures.



# We convened the first global network on feminist digital justice

In partnership with DAWN, a leading Southern feminist organization, we initiated a global working group inviting 20+ leading feminist scholars and practitioners from Asia, Africa, and Latin America to evolve a feminist vision for the digital economy. Weaving together issues of misrecognition and maldistribution rampant in data capitalism, our platform has made a unique contribution to feminist analysis. Through 15+ discussions in 2021-22, the group has evolved an issue paper and a set of principles on feminist digital justice that will feed into a campaign for feminist digital innovation at the Commission on the Status of Women-2023 (CSW), where digital technologies are part of the priority theme.

Also, see our efforts with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) on Feminist Digital Justice, and the wonderful publication — 'The Deal We Always Wanted' — that came out of our dialogues on global feminism.







#### We are at the cutting-edge of naming how digitality is changing work and workers' rights

It would be no exaggeration to say that our theoretical and policy efforts have visibilized the need to account for algorithmic control as a new form of exploitation, and the idea of workers' data rights as a vital agenda, in digitalized workplaces. Our credibility in the space has been affirmed through various key partnerships, including with leading institutions like the ILO and philanthropic foundations like the Ford Foundation. To inform the directions of philanthropic effort on just futures of work, we successfully convened a series of dialogues with over 80 scholars, practitioners, unions, multilateral agencies, government representatives, and digital rights activists from across the world.

# OUR PARTNERSHIP IMPACT FOOTPRINT Worked with 100+ CSO and think tanks Spanning 20 countries Collaborated with 10+ education institutes Supported 5 union federations Supported by 10 funding agencies Consulted by 15+ government bodies Anchoring 15+ key networks

# Forging New Models for Digital Citizenship

Connectivity does not automatically lead to meaningful inclusion in economic, social, and political life. The barriers to participation in the digital economy and society are sociostructural, arising as they do in historical power structures.

Our field programs have undertaken the difficult work to address this through sustained interventions with the public education system, local government institutions, and marginalized communities. We have co-constructed context-appropriate models of education and digital literacy that harness the emancipatory potential of digital technologies for the empowerment and participation of those rendered voiceless by the powers that be, also working with grassroots and public institutions to build capabilities for adaptation and transformation. Our commitment to community and institutional capacity-building has only deepened through these years of the pandemic .

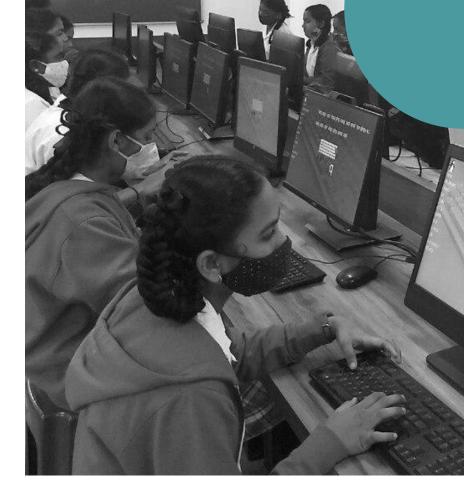


## We addressed the education emergency head-on

The pandemic-triggered school closures in India have led to an alarming education deprivation, and loss in foundational abilities in languages and mathematics among school-going children, particularly those from low-income households. In 2021-22, our Centre for Education and Technology stepped up efforts to address this crisis. We facilitated the launch of the National Coalition on the Education Emergency (NCEE), bringing together educationists and civil society groups from eight states in the country to build social pressure on policymakers to reopen public schools on a priority basis.

Through research briefs, media op-eds, a "Back to School" campaign, and community engagement, the Coalition kept alive the 'education emergency' issue in public discourse.

In Karnataka, our efforts succeeded in persuading the government to advance the date for school reopening, and we also supported the Department of State Educational Research and Training to evolve appropriate guidelines for safe reopening of schools.



We convened 10 'Back to School' camps with students from socio-economically marginalized communities to address the learning loss caused by prolonged school closures. Our efforts helped 750+ students, who had missed school for months, to return to structured learning, and 25 batches of teachers to navigate challenges of online teaching through open courses.



#### Our Prakriye Centre continues to be an enabler of rural women's access to entitlements and services

The pandemic years have seen acute distress in rural India, with disruption of public institutional services that have hit poor women the hardest. This year, through 37 gender helpdesks at the community-level, our team of trained para-counsellors provided support services to over 600 women survivors of domestic violence.

Our information centers helped process over 1,000+ welfare entitlement applications, also reaching 1,500 women members of Self Help Groups through media-supported learning forums. Women infomediaries of two centers rose to the occasion, collectivizing community members and mobilizing the local government to convene Pension Adalats (adjudicatory processes to respond to people's pension-related grievances). Over 100 pension applications from 61 villages were successfully filed through this effort.



#### PRAKRIYE IMPACT AT A GLANCE

1000+	welfare entitlement apps processed
1500	women members of SHGs reached
600	survivors of DV supported
100	pension applications filed
37	gender helpdesks set up
61	villages reached

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#### Our Hosa Hejje, Hosa Dishe (New Steps, New Directions) team filled a critical gap – reaching out to over 600 girls in Bengaluru city through FM radio

During the pandemic-related school closures, we initiated a 30-minute FM radio program, 'Nan Voice Nan Choice' (My Voice, My Choice), to continue our work with adolescent girls, supporting their empowerment journeys on a virtual platform. Since our in-school girls' clubs were not possible to organize in this period, the radio program was a timely innovation, using a range of innovative formats — expert interviews with feminist counsellors, teachers, activists, and mental health professionals; a fictionalized mini-serial on adolescent girls' challenges for self-actualization; and inspirational stories of girls who broke barriers — in order to communicate and reinforce a feminist narrative about adolescence. Girls from marginalized social backgrounds enthusiastically participated in the brainstorming and content development. Over 600 girls were reached through this program and the audio bank of content will be taken to schools across the state in the coming year. Give the program a listen.





Nan Voice Nan Choice was one of my favorite programs during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was educational, entertaining, and motivating for not just adolescent girls, but all listeners in general. Each episode delivered a strong message, and the program espoused values such as cooperation, mutual respect, overcoming prejudiced mindsets.

– Dr. Umashree, one of our regular viewers, was all praise for the program, terming it as a "morale booster during the pandemic."

## Thematic Highlights



## The Future of Work and Workers' Rights

The impact of digital technologies in the labor market and the shifting nature of work in the platform paradigm has emerged as the central peg of focus for our research and advocacy. This year, we have built on the solid foundation of past work, to continue tracking the evolution of this dynamic in multiple ways.

- Read 'How Digitally Restructured Value Chains
  are Reshaping Labor Futures for Women in the
  Global South' by Karishma Banga and Becky
  Faith
- Read <u>'Social Relations under Surveillance</u>
  Capitalism: Is Solidarity Still Possible?' by Bama
  Athreya
- Read 'Worker-Led Alternatives: A Line of Hope for New Platform Futures' where Satyavrat Krishnakumar and Amay Korjan take stock of the platform cooperative movement



#### **KEY MILESTONES**

- Field-building through research. Our team worked on a number of research initiatives tracking this space. Of particular note is our report for the ILO, 'Platform Labour in Search of Value', which was released this year. This report, based on primary research and interviews, captures the new strategies being deployed by workers in the digital economy to reclaim their right to decent work and harness the affordances of the platform economy for worker-led enterprises.
- Shaping discourse through popular writing. We also brought out a number
  of incisive think-pieces and essays around labor issues for our alternative
  media platform, Bot Populi, as well as for DataSyn, our monthly newsletter.
- Supporting union trainings. We supported trade union capacity-building on key aspects of the digital economy and associated legislation in India and the rest of the world to equip members with information and knowledge resources to navigate the new terrain.



#### WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

- A podcast series on worker data rights that will unpack the new meanings of labor rights in the digitalizing context
- A May Day series for DataSyn with key labor voices from around the world
- A global strategy event convened in collaboration with international union federations



## Digital Trade and E-commerce

As trade becomes the determining factor that shapes the digital economy, our work has focused on the implications of emerging digital trade deals for the right to development. We have joined trade activists to denounce stances espoused by the big powers — cross-border data flows without any controls, restrictions on regulation of transnational digital companies, and intensification of IP rights in digital service value chains — conditions that will only end up reinforcing Big Tech's power.

Read 'Building Back Better with E-commerce:

A Feminist Roadmap'



#### **KEY MILESTONES**

- Furthering our engagement with UNCTAD. At the fifteenth session of the
  crucial UNCTAD Conference in October 2021, our statements underscored
  the urgent imperative to put distributive justice at the center in data value
  chains. We were also invited to be expert reviewers for the 'UNCTAD Digital
  Economy 2021 Report' exploring cross-border data flows and their future
  governance.
- Striving for gender justice in trade. We continued to counter the neoliberal opportunity rhetoric in policy dialogues on gender, trade, and development, highlighting the real concerns on equity and inclusion in the digital economy. To construct a positive agenda, we wrote a briefing paper on a feminist roadmap for e-commerce, also presenting insights at the WTO Public Forum, 2021. We also took part in <a href="Learning webinars">Learning webinars</a> organized by the Gender and Trade Coalition to reflect on digital trade and sustainability.



#### WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

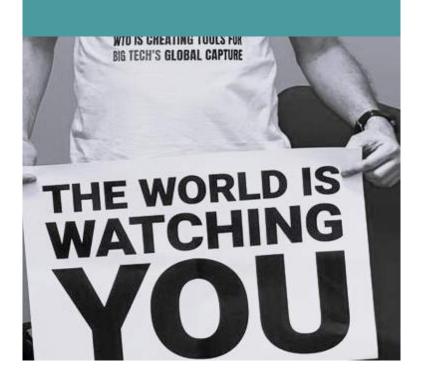
- Engagement with policymakers from developing countries to equip them to challenge hegemonic digital trade discourses of the Global North and resist capitulation at the WTO Ministerial Conference-12
- Strategic advice to civil society groups engaging with the G-20 Digital
   Economy Agenda and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for e-commerce
- Ongoing tracking of digital trade developments and civil society capacitybuilding on the data economy and its intersections with trade mandates
- A new line of research on exploring the terms of integration of women's micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the global digital marketplace

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#### Dismantling Big Tech

This year, we expanded our work on Big Tech, exploring through writing, research, and advocacy the policy directions necessary to rein in the monopolistic tendencies in the platform economy, and reclaim the potential of data for equitable development.





#### **KEY MILESTONES**

- Launching the 'State of Big Tech' report. To build strategies to respond to the aggrandizement of Big Tech power, we launched a flagship report inviting contributions from scholar-practitioners. Our volume, slated for release in the second half of 2022, moves past the critique of data capital to identify new horizons for resistance in popular mobilization, discursive alternatives, multilateral and national-level advocacy, alternative techno-governance strategies, and more.
- Engaging with platform regulation. We engaged with important regulatory developments coming out of India and the European Union (EU) with respect to the digital economy and data governance. We made a <u>submission to the European Commission (EC)</u> on the Draft Digital Markets Act, emphasizing the need to move away from an individualistic model of governance in favor of a community approach for rights holders, the necessity for wider data sharing, as well as structural separation across platform layers.
- Confronting the ed-tech leviathan. Through our research, we have been pushing
  back against the privatized takeover of education through digitalization. Our article
  for the Economic and Political Weekly examined the implications of Google and
  BYJU'S partnership on education services, and what this implies for the social role of
  education.



#### WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

- Bringing together a cohort of Big Tech-and-Society media fellows for DataSyn
- Convening a campaign on ed-tech with national and global civil society
- Engaging with Global Digital Compact process and due diligence regulation for corporations



### Data and Al Infrastructures

The architecture of the digital is often coopted into the private, where narratives of efficiency and seamless convenience are offered upfront, while concerns of privacy and data extraction are pushed to the background. Our work has advocated using data and its associated ecosystem as a knowledge commons through a measured approach that deters flagrant exploitation by the private sector, especially deeppocketed Big Tech companies.

Read our op-ed in The Hindu, entitled 'Forging a Social Contract for Data', which asks for a social commons for data, and outlines the responsibilities of the state in creation of public goods.



#### **KEY MILESTONES**

- Incubating the Intelligent Infrastructures series. To track
  developments on digital infrastructures and shape the policy
  and techno-design ecosystem around it, we launched the
  Intelligent Infrastructures series. Two papers, on the Data
  Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA) and on
  financial technologies have been authored as part of the series.
- Forwarding a framework for a semi-commons approach to data governance. As part of the Data Governance Network series of working papers, we outlined a <u>conceptual framework</u> for data governance to enable the social and public value of data to be unlocked.



#### WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

- Convening working group meetings under the Right
  Digitalization umbrella, for a positive plan of action for
  digitalization in India
- Advocating for a multilateral framework for data and Al governance



#### Gender Justice in the Digital Paradigm

Our research and advocacy is focused on constantly interrogating new forms of erosion of the public and the commodification of the private in the digital paradigm and the implications for gender justice. We have continued to strive for a new political grammar of feminist digital justice, building on Southern feminist traditions.

On Dignified Menstruation
Day, we released our research
analyzing the global menstruapps
market from a feminist political
economy lens.



#### **KEY MILESTONES**

- Evolving a feminist vision for social media governance. We undertook a pathbreaking Indiabased study of the typologies of sexism and misogyny on Twitter in India. The research shows how algorithmic amplification on platforms contributes to 'pile-on' hate, rendering traditional threshold tests for hate speech completely inadequate. Regulation must, therefore, address gender-based hate as a structural problem of corporate tech design.
- Campaign to bring the violence of data extractivism into focus. For the 16 Days of Activism, an
  annual international feminist campaign on elimination of gender-based violence, we <u>organized</u> a
  Twitter chat with Breakthrough India demanding accountability of big social media platforms for
  gender-based cyberviolence. The campaign gained over 1,000 impressions per tweet on Twitter.
- Convening feminist dialogues on digital economy and society. In September 2021, we organized a
  roundtable on Platform Planet: A Feminist Digital Justice Exploration, bringing together 18 feminist
  scholars-activists and researchers. The cutting-edge debates at the workshop culminated in a special
  issue for our digital magazine, Bot Populi that racked up over 1,700 reads.
- Developing proof of concept models for alternative platform enterprises. In collaboration with LabourNet, Vrutti, and SEWA Cooperative Federation, we are excited to be rolling out an action research on worker-centric platform services.



#### WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

- Organizing a virtual global conference centered on feminist visions of social media governance
- **Producing a resource guide for the judiciary and lawyers** in India on rights-based redress to victims of gender-based cyberviolence
- Undertaking research on the Indian judiciary's response to online gender-based violence
- **Engaging with global and national policy debates** on digital and data innovation a theme aligned to the upcoming CSW in 2023



# Prakriye Field Center for Community Informatics and Development

Since 2005, our Prakriye field center has been engaged in leveraging new digital technologies for socio-political empowerment of women and adolescent girls from marginalized communities in three sub-districts of rural Mysuru. Two strategies are at the heart of the Prakriye center's efforts: a network of seven community information centers that are the nodes of a womencentered information and knowledge ecosystem at the grassroots; and a para-counselling service comprising 37 gender help desks providing a first port of call for emergency responses to domestic violence.





#### **KEY MILESTONES**

- Providing redress for gender-based violence. Our gender help desks provided
  first point of support to over 700 women and girls facing various forms of
  gender-based violence across our operational area. The service was a vital
  lifeline during the pandemic when lockdowns had led to an intensification of
  violence within households.
- Deploying digital pedagogies for empowerment education. Our digital
  media pedagogies using video and audio stories, integrated voice response
  (IVR) messaging, and participatory production of video stories, were able
  to support 900 women, 644 men, 659 women, and 90 adolescent girls in
  acquiring critical perspectives on gender cultural norms, and women's rights to
  full citizenship.
- Enabling entitlements access through community information centers. Our
  information centers, operated by young women infomediaries from local
  communities and supported by 19 community mobilizers, reached out to over
  10,000 members of local communities connecting women and men from
  the margins to vital social security schemes and livelihood programs.



#### WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

- **Internal impact evaluation of our work** for strategic consolidation in the postpandemic context
- Creating village-level support groups of women and girls to take up local civic-public issues and provide peer solidarity in times of crisis
- Grassroots dialogues between community and local public institutions for strengthening entitlements access and the service delivery ecosystem, with particular attention to new challenges in digital welfare systems



## Education and Technology

The long shadow of the pandemic continues to expose and accentuate the stratification in the Indian school system, while giving impetus to an unchecked, unaccountable digitalization in education that robs the sector of its public nature. Our work continues to respond to these challenges.

This year, we pioneered a new course on 'Teaching Thinking through Concept Mapping'\_for student-teachers, which focused on strengthening their analytical, synthetical, creative, and critical thinking skills.



#### **KEY MILESTONES**

- Working with educators on integrating technology in learning. Our ongoing teacher-development
  programs, including workshops, on-site, and online courses have benefited more than 2,300 inservice and pre-service teachers in several states across India. Our focus is on supporting teachers
  to engage with critical perspectives on technology in education, in addition to teaching them to
  integrate digital tools and methods in their practice.
- Strengthening institutional perspectives on community participation in education. We contributed
  to a position paper on community participation in school education as part of a Government of
  Karnataka committee on implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. We stressed
  on the emancipatory possibilities of digital technologies in collectivizing parents and community
  members, as well as in opening the information about their schools, available in the education
  system, to their scrutiny, for greater transparency and accountability.
- Shaping discourse on digitalization in education. We deepened discussions around crucial issues
  such as AI in education, safe reopening of schools, mapping education during Covid-19, and more
  at conferences and panel discussions hosted by major educational stakeholders and organizations,
  such as the Comparative Education Society of India, Right to Education Forum (RTEF), and as a part
  of the National Coalition on the Education Emergency. We also took these discussions to digital rights
  forums such as Rightscon.



#### WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

- Expanding our work on adolescent girl empowerment through the second phase of the "Hosa Hejje
  Hosa Dishe" program, forming 'Kishori clubs' (for adolescent girls) in around 300 schools in 5 districts
  of Karnataka, where a key focus will be reducing the girl drop-out rate in education, and preventing
  early marriages
- Collaborative work with state government agencies in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and teacher education institutions in Karnataka, on technology in school and teacher education
- Partnering with the Government of Kerala for building a public AI model in education founded on
  values of teacher agency, community accountability and critical pedagogy. Expanding work with the
  NCEE on equity and inclusion in digitally-integrated education



## Planet, People, and Well-being

This year, we worked with a committed focus to track and shape emerging debates on digitalization in health, food systems, and agriculture, advocating for community-centered data rights in these sectors. We have also underscored equitable distribution of data value as a key governance consideration in sectoral policies.





#### **KEY MILESTONES**

- Policy advocacy for democratized data infrastructures in health. We engaged with policy consultations announced by the National Health Authority (NHA) in India on the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM). We recommended strong data use limitations to safeguard public health datasets from corporate appropriation.
- Working towards farmer-centric data models in agriculture.
   We also responded to the public consultation announced by the Indian Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare on their white paper for the India Digital Ecosystem of Agriculture (IDEA). We made a clear pitch for farmer centricity in policymaking, prevention of corporate capture of core digital agriculture ecosystems, and decentralization and federation of farmers' community data.



#### WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

- Forging a civil society platform in India focused on farmercentric digitalization in agriculture, under a Right Digitalization umbrella initiative
- Deepening our local-to-global advocacy on food systems, agro-ecology, and data justice in partnership with traditional groups working on these issues

# The IT for Change Social Report

### Reflecting on our Organizational Growth

At 20 years and counting, we are fully seized of the imperative to avoid complacency and inculcate system-wide values that promote self-reflection and agile action. We are conscious that the pandemic has made our mission to promote a technological paradigm towards the highest standards of democracy, social equity, and human well-being ever more urgent.

To respond to this need, we have begun in earnest to build pan-organizational readiness, re-examining and tweaking our programing priorities as well as organizational practices. While we know that the equilibrium between internal maturity and external demands is always a workin-progress, we are confident that we are on the right path.





#### **Expanding organizational talent**

- We strengthened senior leadership in our technology, finance and accounting, and human resource and administration teams, and expanded staffing in these teams to meet the demands of our expanded project roster and large projects in particular
- We expanded our communications team to build our strategic outreach and network support capacities
- We continued to grow our team across various roles and expertise, with 24 new team members joining us in the year. We are now a 56-member strong community, with 62% of our team strength being female







## Strengthening M&E protocols and organizational policy

- To capture the impact of our work in more effective ways and with greater periodicity, we developed and institutionalized new systems to record various quantitative and qualitative metrics
- We initiated a process of quarterly reporting to the organization board, covering pertinent finance and funding information as well as project milestones
- In the past two years, we worked to strengthen our internal governance mechanisms and evolve policy responses for workplace harassment and irregular conduct, and whistleblower protection. This year we added to our organizational policies, a robust child protection and consent procedure that can better protect the rights and vulnerabilities of populations with whom we engage
- We are undertaking an internal impact assessment of our field interventions to tackle gender-based violence. The study will assess outcomes in 25 participating villages to document the program's impact and recommend key strategies for further work



#### **Enabling professional development** and team building

- A workshop in November 2021 facilitated by feminist activist and
- trainer, Vani Periodi, helped the Prakriye team acquire a deeper understanding of how patriarchy impacts women's choices and mobility
- Our education team convened monthly reading seminars on different
- issues in education and social change, including on aspects such as the role of caste and gender in education in order to build critical perspectives and deepen their multi-disciplinary understanding of education
- We convened trainings around gender sensitization and workplace sexual harassment, in English and Kannada with a view to enhance internal understanding around our organizational Policy on Sexual Harassment (POSH) trainings in English and Kannada for the team over March-April 2022
- digitality, the datafying state, and the digital economy undertook a retreat to connect, learn, and envision new tracks for further work

#### 2021- 2022 VISIBILITY & **SOCIAL MEDIA FOOTPRINT**

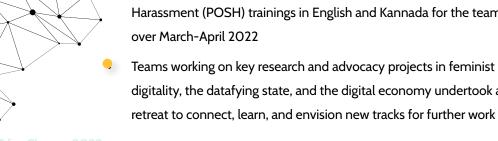
643.1k **Twitter** impressions

303% Instagram engagement spike

15.5k Bot Populi readership

#### 2021- 2022 RESEARCH & ADVOCACY FOOTPRINT

15+	research outputs produced
15+	policy briefs submitted
40+	media articles written
50+	events participated in



# Our Work Out in the World

A defining contribution to the theorization of gender in the platform economy in the postpandemic moment

— Call for contributions issued by the SAGE journal Gender and Development on <u>Macro Frames of Microwork: A study of Indian women workers</u> on AMT, authored by Anita Gurumurthy, Khawla Zainab, and Sadhana Sanjay.

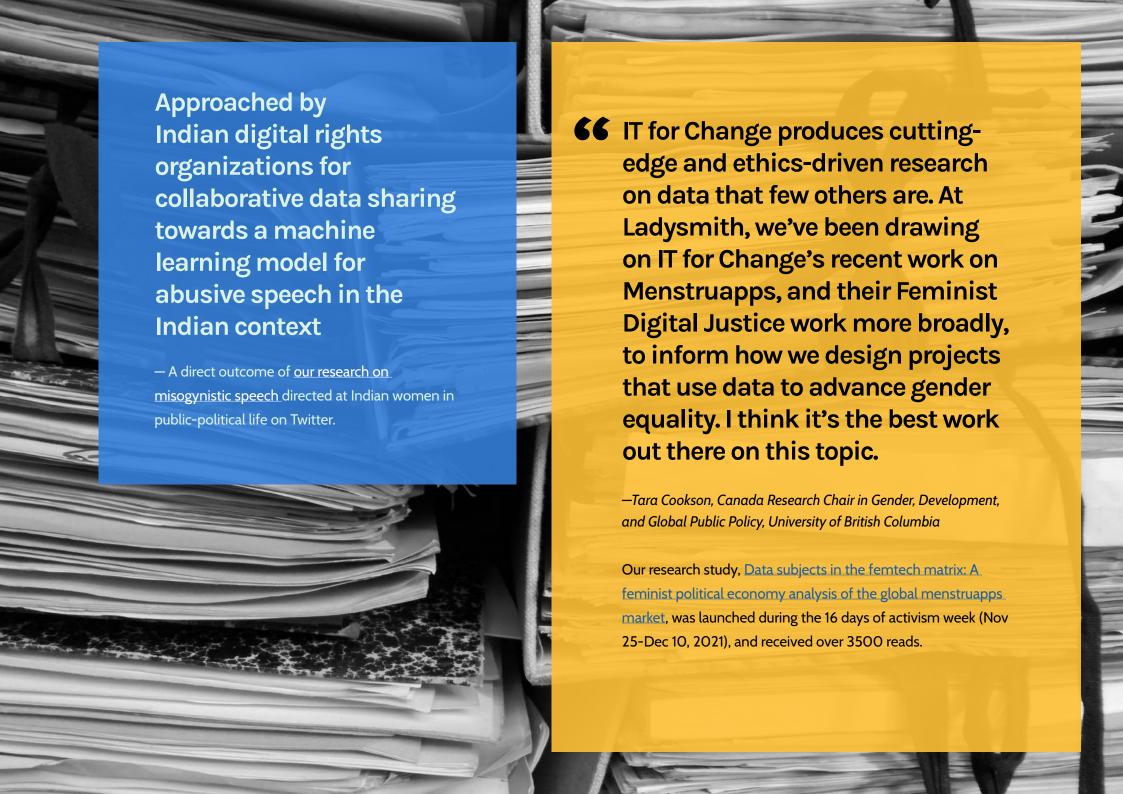
A <u>shorter version of this paper</u>, written for the Economic and Political Weekly, was in SSRN's Top Ten download list in 2021 for a number of queried topics including employment, labor law, value chains, women and labor markets.

# Featured in Evgeny Morozov's The Syllabus as a hidden gem

 Report on <u>Socializing Data value</u>, synthesized from a roundtable with leading scholars on data governance in the field.

two decades, this project was the best I have reviewed, and that too, despite the challenges of Covid-19!

Appreciation from evaluator for our project <u>Centering</u>
 Women in India's Digitalizing Economy.



## **Twitter Mentions**



"Assetization is one of the most important issues of our day because it's about who gets to own the future and how they do so". Makes me think we could replace the term #digitalization with #assetization in most cases?

botpopuli.net/the-assetizati... via @PopuliBot @keanbirch @TiP\_itu





Our sisters at @ITforChange debunk myth of #gigwork as 'opportunity' for women. "Gendered vulnerabilities require urgent policy attention so the rhetoric of opportunity in the digital context is not a one-way street in which women have to trade rights for economic survival."



We are extremely proud & excited to be releasing our report 'The macro frames of microwork: A study of Indian women workers on AMT in the post-pandemic moment' by Anita Gurumurthy, @khoonkhawla, & @SadhanaSanjay.

The Syllabus

where the Syllabus are the

Our hidden gem of the week "Socializing Data Value" is by Amay Korjan and Vinay Narayan for @ITforChange and @FESonline

The report presents key insights to some critical questions, and possible answers, to the problem of democratizing data value.

itforchange.net/sites/default/...

11:30 PM · Jul 24, 2021 · Twittimer



Do listen to this beautiful discussion covering #Technology #Internet #Blockchain #Aadhar #FinTech #Digital #DigitalCurrency #cryptocurrency #Accountability #transparency #inequality #finance #rights

Recording facebook.com/SavePublicSect...
@ITforChange @alwaysfranc @sritara @idesibanda

CEA Centre for Financial Accountability @cfa\_ind · Feb 27

Join us today to understand the Fintech Landscape of Blockchains, CryptoCurrency and the Digital Rupee

106:00 PM IST, Feb 27, 2022



## **Notable citations**

- Essays from the <u>Digital New Deal</u> and the paper <u>Breaking</u> up <u>Big Tech</u>, cited in <u>UNCTAD's Digital Economy Report</u> 2021, a flagship UN document that shapes the discourse around the global governance of the digital economy.
   Also invited as an expert reviewer on the report.
- Research on young women's experiences of cyberviolence in South India cited in a study on gender gap in social media use in India by BBC Media Action.
- Policy brief on worker's data rights, cited in <u>ILO Labour</u>
   <u>Conference Input Report</u>, June 2022.

words online education and EdTech. While online education was once seen with doubt, Byju's has reported consistent growth in users and the pandemic has given them a turbo boost. What are the implications of EdTech companies in changing how students learn and grow? What types of partnerships are EdTech companies forging to grow? How can technology be used to bring us closer to the ideal of education as a transformative force for progress, to spark innovation and to address inequity?

These are some of the questions that researcher Gurumurthy Kasinathan will help address. We will be discussing his articles "The Edtech Leviathan" and "Platform Capitalism and Edtech."

Gurumurthy Kasinathan is one of the founders of IT for Change. His areas of expertise include ICT integration in school education, teacher education and pre-service teacher education.



EdTech Platforms: Transforming India's Educational Spaces?





## **Media mentions**

- In a podcast interview with EPW Engage about EdTech companies, we pointed out how technology can be used to bring us closer to the ideal of education as a transformative force for progress.
- We spoke to the Quint on 'Cybercrime Against Women and its Larger Causes'
- We were <u>interviewed by the Gig podcast</u>

creating a secure cyber world, noted how "the digital space creates virtualised lives that we have no control over," and that "the Bulli Bai case pointed to the paradox that those who perpetrated violations, in this case, are an insignificant part of a larger socio-political fabric in which religious polarisation and hate against Muslims is the ordering principle."

"They are not just the tip of the iceberg, but in some sense, foot soldiers of an ideology that many others, much more powerful than them, construct, endorse, and normalise."



Anita Gurumurthy, Executive Director, IT for Change

The hatred spills over to other platforms too. Handles and trends on Twitter show a ditto menace, where accounts are used to target women of the other community. These accounts, while not causing any evident damage to the order of

# Testimonials

I am extremely proud of our collaboration and alliance with IT for Change in past years. I have closely witnessed their generosity in sharing their profound and extensive knowledge, their feminist style in leading conversations, and inviting diverse voices to these discussions while generating a safe space. They are spearheading the generation of new expertise in fields that are crucial for humanity and the planet, with a critical feminist and decolonial view.

#### **Emilia Reyes**

Program Director, Equidad de Genero: Ciudadania, Trabajo y Familia

IT for Change is highly valued within the digital development space for a reason: not only is their research of the highest quality, but they take it one step forward when it comes to advocacy, training, and actual interventions. They have gone from strength to strength and I will always look up to them for a critical, but constructive perspective.

#### Savita Bailur

Senior Research Director, Caribou Digital; Adjunct Professor, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University



#### Quarraisha Abdool Karim

Co-chair of UN STI Forum

Through IT for Change's ICT Integration in Education course, our students learned how to use technology and teach creatively. These classes have greatly helped our students to understand the use of technology in creating interesting teaching materials, as well as to upgrade their digital skills, which is the need of the hour.

#### Lokesh T.N.

Head, Department of Education, NMKRV College for Women, Bengaluru

Most of the issues addressed in the course 'Facilitating Adolescent Empowerment for Equal Society' conducted by IT for Change resonate with on-the-ground realities. It is highly useful for those working on eradicating the inequalities faced by adolescent girls.

#### Chowda Reddy B M

Assistant Teacher, Navodaya Vidyalaya residential high school, Vadipinayakanahalli, Shidlaghatta Taluk, Chikkaballapura District

of digital technologies — their potential for advancing human lives while also standing to exacerbate divides. IT for Change's work lies at the heart of this paradox. Their work on internet governance, digital rights, decent work, feminist technologies, and gender are but examples of addressing how to capitalize on the possibilities and mitigate the threats of digital transformation towards inclusion. Thank you, IT for Change, for your dynamism and your agility in tackling issues that are of utmost relevance to development in India and the rest of the Global South.

#### Nagla Rizk

Professor of Economics and Founding Director, Access to Knowledge for Development, The American University in Cairo

Our partnership with IT for Change has allowed us to successfully conduct our online capacity-building program for teacher-educators of Himachal Pradesh. Our teacher-educators found IT for Change's online courses on Moodle and Big Blue Button platforms very useful. Their support ensured that they were able to meaningfully use ICTs to make learning easy and interesting.

#### Manoj K Saxena

Head & Dean (Education), Central University of Himachal Pradesh

IT for Change has been a valuable partner in our efforts to secure labor rights and social protection for gig and platform workers in India in the last few years. They have helped us to evaluate the Social Security Code and provide insights on the Motor Vehicle Aggregator guidelines, 2020. They have extended their expertise in assisting us with surveys and reports highlighting the hardships faced by gig and platform workers during Covid-19. We look forward to collaborating with them in our future endeavors.

#### Shaik Salauddin & Basudev Barman

Indian Federation of App-based Transport Workers (IFAT)

IT for Change is one of the best hubs in the world for the production and circulation of knowledge about the digital economy. I highlight their vision from the Global South, which is not understood as something exotic, but as part of the majority worldview. IT for Change is essential inside and outside universities. I am very happy to have found IT for Change on my way.

#### Rafael Grohmann

Assistant Professor of Media Studies/ Critical Data and Platform Studies, University of Toronto

Over the past decade, Big Tech giants have penetrated the Global South, with disastrous outcomes for socio-economic equality and human rights. Yet, there is hope for a better world, based on popular education and activism. IT for Change is a leading light in the struggle for digital justice. Its reports are uncompromised and incisive, offering a much-needed counter to digital colonialism and capitalism, as well as practical solutions. It has been a pleasure to work with them, and we should all cherish and support their contributions to justice in the digital age.

#### **Michael Kwet**

Visiting Fellow, Information Society Project, Yale Law School

For me, working with IT for Change has always been a learning experience to understand how our economies are restructuring due to digitalization. Not only has IT for Change provided much-needed cutting-edge critiques, but they have been an important ally for our campaigns to promote workers' rights in the digital services supply chain.

#### **Marina Durano**

Adviser on Care Economy and Partnership Engagements, UNI Global

UNCTAD has worked closely with IT for Change in the past few years, notably in the area of data for development. We very much value IT for Change's research and active involvement in policy discussions bringing innovative thinking from a civil society and development perspective.

#### Torbjörn Fredriksson

Head of E-commerce and Digital Economy Branch, UNCTAD

# **Retreat Diaries**

With the cautious return to on-site work and in-person activities this year, we worked to create opportunities for building camaraderie among colleagues and recreating our sense of community after an extended period of remote work. You can find a full list of our colleagues here.



In October 2021, the program and education teams took a one-day trip to Guhantara, on the outskirts of Bengaluru for a well-earned day of leisure, and team-building. The education team also convened reading sessions to reflect and rethink on their pedagogic practices through the year and aid planning for the coming year. Articles such as the 'Origins of India's Textbook Culture' by Prof Krishna Kumar, former Director of NCERT, were read and discussed in detail as part of this initiative.

The Research and Advocacy team, scattered across different parts of the country, gathered in Bengaluru in May 2022 for a three day retreat at the Fireflies Intercultural Center. The intense program helped the team undertake a systematic, review, and feedback for the team members working on our flagship research projects. The retreat was also a great space for the team to connect, deepen their rapport and re-establish a common commitment to the organizational goal and vision.

# **Event Highlights**

In the past year, we have been involved in key global policy events, have convened critical roundtables and institutes, and been invited to conferences and webinars to contribute key messages on digital justice in its many forms. Here are some highlights:



Read the report.

# © IT OR CHANGE ORGANIZATION

Tune into the session recording.

# Socializing Data Value: How Can Data Governance Meet the Challenge?

#### 11-12 MAY 2021, ONLINE

A core focus of IT for Change's work has been exploring institutional governance frameworks for data that can democratize value creation and distribution. As part of this effort, we hosted a virtual global strategy roundtable, which brought together a select group of leading scholars, scholar-activists, and practitioners. The roundtable, coorganized with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, explored the contestations characterizing the current economy and its data (dis)order, existing and emerging governance responses, policy visions, and alternative practices that seek to socialize data value.

#### **NOTABLE ASPECTS**

- Brought together leading scholars in the field of data governance to broach a frontier conversation around data value
- Synthesis report from the event featured in Evegny Morozov's Syllabus
- Participants continue to collaborate with us and each other and build on the momentum of the dialogue

# IT for Change at the WTO Public Forum 2021

#### 30 SEPTEMBER-2 OCTOBER 2021, GENEVA

At the World Trade Organization Public Forum 2021, in collaboration with global civil society actors, we convened and participated in two sessions on data flows, e-commerce, and global trade. Our inputs, made by Parminder Jeet Singh at these panels focussed on the data sovereignty of the Global South and how digital trade and data laws can be designed for inclusion and poverty reduction. We also looked at the role of bodies such as the WTO in achieving this goal.

#### **NOTABLE ASPECTS**

- Forwarded a strong southern standpoint on data sovereignty in panel discussions and sessions
- Galvanized global civil society coordination around the forum in partnership with OWINFS

# © IT GOVERNANCE PORMANCE PORMA

Read IT for Change's statement.

#### IT for Change at UN Internet Governance Forum

#### 6-12 DECEMBER 2021, POLAND/ONLINE

At the Internet Governance Forum, a global multistakeholder platform that facilitates the discussion of public policy issues pertaining to the internet, Anita Gurumurthy, denounced the moves by the UN Secretary-General to promote pro-Big Tech multistakeholderist global governance arrangements in the guise of a Global Digital Compact. She took part in the Main Session on Digital Cooperation - Quo Vadis. We have also been furthering this critical perspective on the multistakeholder capture of the digital governance conversation at the UN in the People's Working Group on Multistakeholderism.

#### **NOTABLE ASPECTS**

- Pre-event panel discussion convened on Digital Policy Making from Below: Ask the Impacted Sectors First with civil society representatives
- Over eight sessions convened/ participated on issues spanning data justice, fintech, digitalization in health etc.



# IT for Change at CESI's 11th Annual International Conference

#### 17-19 DECEMBER 2021, ONLINE

Comparative Education Society of India (CESI), a premier national organization in the area of Education Research, organized its annual national conference in December 2021 on 'Mapping Education during Covid-19'. Gurumurthy Kasinathan, convenor of CESI's 'Education and Technology' research interest group was part of the panel discussion and two paper-presentation sessions exploring the intersections of education and tech.

#### **NOTABLE ASPECTS**

- A resounding success with delegates from all over India participating in the event
- Panel discussion featured eminent educators including Prof. Rajaram Sharma, NCERT Joint Director (retd); Dr. Anusha Ramanathan, TISS; and Dr. G. Nagarjuna, Homi Baba Science Centre.



Read the report.

### Institute on Feminist Perspectives on Digital Economy and Society

#### 13-14 NOVEMBER 2021, ONLINE

Convened as part of IT for Change's School for Digital Futures, this two-day virtual capacity-building institute for young feminists covered diverse topics such as the platform economy and macroeconomic shifts, and feminist agendas for policy in the digital economy and society. The institute also focused on addressing the critical issue of voice and claims-making in a platformized society.

#### **NOTABLE ASPECTS**

- First-of-its-kind learning initiative, providing conceptual and analytical inputs and in-depth capacity building on feminist digitality from a strong southern standpoint
- Institute reached over 75 participants globally from civil society, private sector, and academia
- The first step towards building an enduring community of scholars, practitioners, and activists in the space, providing an impetus for more ambitious pedagogic ventures planned by IT for Change in the coming year



# Our Partners & Networks

We have worked with, and are associated with 100+ CSOs, academic institutions, union federations, private-sector entities, government and multilateral bodies across the globe. Here is a glance at our list of partners:

## **Partners**

## CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs)

#### **National**

Aapti Institute

Bharatiya Krishak Samaj

Breakthrough India

Center for Health and Social Change

Centre for Internet and Society

Internet Freedom Foundation

Oxfam India

Tattle Civic Technologies

#### Asia-Pacific

Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development

**ETC Group** 

Focus on the Global South

Third World Network

#### **MENA**

Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI)

#### US-Canada

Centre for Innovation and Governance

Web foundation

#### Europe

The Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations

Centre tricontinental

Clean Clothes Campaign

Food First Information and Action Network

SINE Foundation

Transnational Institute

Whynot Lab

#### Latin America

InternetLab

Social Watch

#### Global

Civil Society Group on Financing for Development

Commonwealth of Learning

People's Health Movement (PHM)

**GRAIN** 

#### **UNION FEDERATIONS**

International Trade Union Confederation

International Transport Workers Federation

Indian Federation of App-based Transport Workers

**Public Services International** 

UNIglobal

#### GOVERNMENTS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND MULTILATERAL AGENCIES

European Union

International Labour Organization

Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society (KREIS)

Kendriya Vidyala Sanghatan (KVS)

Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education, Government of Kerala

Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council, Government of Kerala

Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India

National Human Rights Commission, Government of India

NITI Aayog

Paris Peace Forum

South Centre (G-77)

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Science and Technology Forum

UNWOMEN

UN Special Rapporteur on the Freedom of Expression

#### PRIVATE SECTOR ENTITIES

Indian Software Product Industry Round Table

LabourNet

Sewa Cooperative Federation

Vrutti

#### DONOR AGENCIES, FOUNDATIONS AND PHILANTHROPIES

A.T.E Chandra Foundation

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

**British Asian Trust** 

**British Telecom** 

Edelgive foundation

**European Commission** 

Ford Foundation

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

IDRC Canada

Kotak Mahindra Bank CSR

Omidyar Network India

#### **ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS**

Access to Knowledge for Development Centre, American University of Cairo

Center for Excellence in Teacher Education, Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Institute of Development Studies

London School of Economics

Open Data Institute

Regional Institute of English, South India (RIESI)

The New School

**Tilburg University** 

University of Melbourne

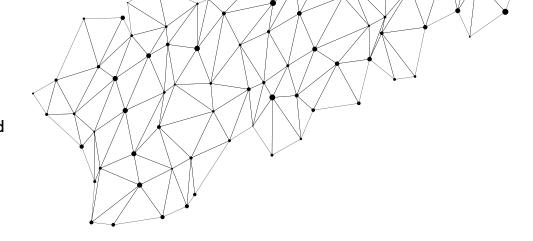
University of Sao Paulo

University of Manchester

## **Networks**

We also anchor, and are closely involved in policy, advocacy and research networks on global digital justice issues.

Here is a glance at the key networks we are part of:



APRCEM South Asia Working Group

Data Governance network

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era

EdTech Watch

Fair Green and Global Alliance

Gender and Trade Coalition

Global Trade Justice Network

Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence

Joint Action Committee Against Foreign Retail and E-commerce

Just Net Coalition

National Coalition on Education Emergency

Our World is not for Sale

People's Working Group on Multistakeholderism (PWGM)

Platform Governance Research Network Right Digitalisation Network

RTE Forum

Transform Health Coalition

# Projects & Publications

# The Essential IT for Change Reading List: 2021-22

#### RESEARCH REPORTS

Data Subjects in the Femtech Matrix: A.
Feminist Political Economy Analysis of the
Global Menstruapps Market. Feminist Digital
Justice. DAWN and IT for Change
Nandini Chami, R. Vaishno Bharati, Anushka
Mittal, and Ankita Aggarwal

#### FROM THE PRESS

The Crypto Assets Conundrum in The Hindu.
Parminder Jeet Singh

#### **JOURNAL ARTICLE**

The EdTech Leviathan in the Economic and Political Weekly
Gurumurthy Kasinathan and Amshuman
Dasarathy

#### **EVENT REPORT**

Socializing Data Value: Reflections on the State of Play, observations from a virtual roundtable. Amay Korjan and Vinay Narayan

#### THINK PIECE

Credit Scoring Algorithms as Tools for Financial Inclusion: A Development Perspective
Anuradha Ganapathy

#### FROM THE DATASYN VAULT

Time for Upgrade: Why Competition Law is Not Enough for the Platform Economy Shreeia Sen

#### NOTES FROM THE FIELD

How Does Aadhaar Enabled Welfare Delivery
Exclude Women?
Nayana Kirasur

#### **POLICY BRIEF**

Data Empowerment and Protection

Architecture: Side-stepping empowerment for convenience?

Tanay Mahindru and Anushka Mittal

#### **BLOG**

A Feminist Social Contract for a New Digital Economic Future

Avantika Tewari

#### FORTHCOMING

State of Big Tech: Dismantling Digital Enclosures.

IT for Change

The Indian Judiciary's Tryst with Online Genderbased Violence: An Empirical Analysis of Indian Case-law.

IT for Change

National Gender Fellowships on Gender and the Digital Economy (Research papers and long-form essays).

IT for Change

Right to Education in the Digital Society. (Book chapter for Routledge).

IT for Change



# Annexures

## **2021 Events**

APR 30 | PANEL DISCUSSION **APRIL How is WhatsApp Moving into Commerce** Save WhatsApp Coalition MAY 3 | PANEL DISCUSSION MAY Will Multilateral Governance of Digital **Technology Close the Digital Divide?** STI Forum 2021 MAY 12 | PANEL DISCUSSION **Beyond State Control and Corporate Power: An Alternative Digitalization of Public Health** Geneva Global Health Hub MAY 20 | CONSULTATION **Civil Society Consultation for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries** Government of Bangladesh and the Government of Canada MAY 25 | PANEL DISCUSSION Realigning Data and Technology at the Global Solutions Summer School 2021 **Global Solutions** 

MAY 6 | PANEL DISCUSSION

The Thin Line between Personal and Non-Personal Data

**Privacy Rules** 

MAY 11-13 | ROUNDTABLE

Socializing Data Value: How Can Data Governance Meet the Challenge?

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

MAY 20-21 | CONFERENCE

Civic Participation in the Datafied Society at the Digital Justice Conference 2021

**Data Justice Lab** 

MAY 28 | CONFERENCE

Keynote: Where to, from Resilience? An Exploration of Post-pandemic, Digital Pathways Towards the 'Distribution of Freedom'

**IFIP** 

JUN 3 | COURSE

<u>Crash Course on Big Tech and the Global South</u> with Nandini Chami

**Crash Course Economics** 

<u>Digital Trade and Global Inequality – Towards a Multilateral E-commerce Agreement?</u>

German Federal Foreign Office

IT for Change 2022

JUN 10 | WEBINAR

The Future of Data Ecosystems | Learnings for Resilience and Resurgence

**CORE Net and Aapti Institute** 

JUN 14 | PANEL DISCUSSION

Business? As Usual? Looking into the Political Economy of Digital Health and International Cooperation

IT for Change, Medicus Mundi Switzerland, People's Health Movement, Kampala Initiative, Global Health Centre, The Graduate Institute, and STOPAIDS

JUN 25-26 | CONFERENCE

Grappling with the New Normal: English
Language Teaching during Pandemic Times

The Regional Institute of English, South India (RIESI) and IT for Change

JUN 7-12 | PANEL DISCUSSION

IT for Change at RightsCon 2021

RightsCon and IT for Change

JUN 17 | WEBINAR

Precarious Futures for Gender Equality in the Post-covid Tourism World

**Transforming Tourism Initiative** 

JULY

JUL 6 | CONFERENCE

Keynote Lecture at Back to the Future: Techne Student Congress

Techne (AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership) and Loughborough University London

JULI

**AUGUST** 

AUG 7 | WEBINAR

Biodiversity as Big Data: How DSI Fits into Global Data Flows

Global Youth Biodiversity Network and Third World Network

AUG 25 | PANEL DISCUSSION

<u>Industry 4.0 and the Future of Work: Managing the Impacts</u>

<u>Confederation of Indian Industry and Institute for Studies in Industrial Development</u>

AUG 24 | WEBINAR

Platform Accountability for Gender-based Cyber Violence

International Innovation Corps, University of Chicago

IT for Change 2022

• SEPTEMBER	SEP 3-4   SUMMIT Livelihood Session at the India Counter Dialogue on UN Food Systems Summit Jan Sarokar	SEP 22-24   CONFERENCE  Civil Society Forum: 15th Session of the United  Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD15)  Caribbean Policy Development Centre
	SEP 30   PANEL DISCUSSION Social Media, Networks, and Movements for Women's Empowerment The Gender & Health Hub, UNU-IIGH, University of Cape Town, and BBC Media Action	SEP 29- OCT 1   CONFERENCE WTO Public Forum 2021 World Trade Organization
• OCTOBER	OCT 6-7   PANEL DISCUSSION  Women's Safety Symposium for South and Southeast Asia  Facebook	OCT 7   PANEL DISCUSSION Facebook's Oversight Board Meeting on Sharing of Private Residential Information: Asia Rounds Facebook Oversight Board
	OCT 28   CONFERENCE International Online Conference on the 'Other Agenda' Agora Inhabitants of the Earth, Party of the European Left, and Transform! Europe	
NOVEMBER	NOV 12-18   CONFERENCE  TheNewCommonSense - 2021 Conference of the Platform Cooperativism Consortium  Platform Cooperativism Consortium, Institute for Ecological Economy Research, and WZB Berlin Social Science Center	NOV 15-16   CONFERENCE  The Fifth South Asia Forum on the Sustainable  Development Goals (SAFS 2021)  UNESCAP and Sustainable Development Council of Sri Lanka
 	NOV 15-23   CONFERENCE  5th Community Network Xchange Conference  Digital Empowerment Foundation and Internet Society	NOV 16   CONSULTATION  Consultation with CSOs on Sectoral Reporting  Template for the ICT Sector  Partners in Change and UNDP

IT for Change 2022 60

NOV 17 | WEBINAR

IGF Webinar: 16 Years of IGF Evolution and Strengthening – Taking Stock and Looking Forward

Internet Governance Forum

NOV 23 | PANEL DISCUSSION

Covid-19 Impacts and Perspective for Gender
Justice in Asia

**FES Asia** 

#### **DECEMBER**

DEC 3 | TWITTER CHAT

When Hate Goes Digital - Understanding Gender-Based Violence in the Online Public Sphere with Breakthrough India

IT for Change and Breakthrough India

DEC 6-10 | CONFERENCE

**ITfC at UN Internet Governance Forum** 

**UN Internet Governance Forum** 

DEC 9-10 | WEBINAR

Workshops on Agricultural Value Systems and Finance Capital and Contract Farming in India

Centre for Informal Sector and Labour Studies and Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, JNU

DEC 10-11 | CONSULTATION

National Consultation on 'Aligning Youth Work with Livelihood Challenges'

Samvada

## 2022 Events

**JANUARY** 

JAN 16 | WEBINAR

What Rights Should Workers Have to our Own Data?

All India IT & ITES Employees' Union

JAN 19| WEBINAR

**Our Future at Stake** 

People's Working Group on Multistakeholderism

JAN 20 | CONFERENCE

World March of Women's Global Conference: Feminist Solidarity against Corporate Power

World March of Women

JAN 20-21 | WEBINAR

**Al and Extreme Speech Webinar** 

**BOOM** and LMU Munich

**FEBRUARY** 

JAN 31 | WEBINAR

**Economic Issues of Interest in Internet** Governance

Virtual School of Internet Governance

FEB 10 | PANEL DISCUSSION

Virtual Stakeholder Consultation on Non-Personal Data Regulation and Intersection with PDP Bill

The Dialogue

FEB 2 | PANEL DISCUSSION

**UN DESA's Sustainable Development Divison and Ecosoc Partnership Forum Spotlight Session -Bridging the Gap** 

Civil Society Financing for Development (FfD), APRCEM, Action

Group on Erosion, ETC Group, and UNCTAD

FEB 11 | WEBINAR

**Public Reason and Social Media: Questioning the Stakeholders** 

The Economic and Political Weekly

FEB 19 | PANEL DISCUSSION

**Asia Pacific Social Forum** 

Working Peoples Coalition, Joint Action Committee against Foreign Retail and e-commerce, Acorn International, UNI Global Union, and **Progressive International** 

FEB 26 | CONFERENCE

**Digital India Prospects and Challenges** 

Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi

FEB 27 | PANEL DISCUSSION

The Fintech Landscape of Blockchains, Cryptocurrency and the Digital Rupee. Should We

Be Concerned?

People First Consultants and Centre for Financial Accountability

FEB 28 | PANEL DISCUSSION

Southern Region Stakeholders' Conference on Violence Against Women

Department of Women and Child Development, Karnataka

**MARCH** 

MAR 8 | PANEL DISCUSSION

**Gendered Access to Justice** 

One Future Collective

MAR 22 | DISCUSSION

Public Hearing - Covid-19's Impact on Vulnerable **Children's Education** 

Action Aid and Slum Mahila Sanghatana

MAR 29 | WEBINAR

The Future of India's Data Governance Regime

Elliott School of International Affairs

MAR 15 | PANEL DISCUSSION

Feminist Futures in the Digitalizing World of

**Work** 

IT for Change and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

MAR 23 | PANEL DISCUSSION

Data, Platforms and Al: A Troubled Legacy

Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies, IIT Bombay

MAR 30 | PANEL DISCUSSION

**Countering Tech-Facilitated GBV and** 

Intimidation

Women's Foreign Policy Group

# Full List of Publications

## RESEARCH REPORTS, PAPERS, AND ESSAYS FROM OUR PROJECTS

Banga, K., & Faith, B. (2021). How Digitally Restructured Value Chains Are

Reshaping Labor Futures for Women in the Global South. IT for Change.

Bharthur, D., & Aggarwal, A. (2021). Reclaiming a Feminist Digital

Public Sphere from the Margins. Media Development 2021/3.

Chami, N., Bharati, V., Mittal, A., & Aggarwal, A. (2021). <u>Data Subjects</u>

in the Femtech Matrix: A Feminist Political Economy Analysis of the Global

Menstruapps Market. IT for Change.

Desai, A., & Rakesh, B. (2021). Supporting English Language Teaching

During the Pandemic: Experiences with Teacher Education. IT for Change.

Ganapathy, A. (2022). <u>Credit Scoring Algorithms as Tools for Financial</u>

Inclusion: A Development Perspective. IT for Change.

Gurumurthy, A. (2021). <u>Advancing Digital Strategies for Women's Empowerment: Reflections from IT for Change</u>. IT for Change.

Gurumurthy, A., Chami, N., & Bharthur, D. (2021). <u>Platform labour in</u> search of value: A study of workers' organizing practices and business models in the digital economy. ILO.

Gurumurthy, A., & Chami, N. (2021). *Building Back Better with E-Commerce: A Feminist Roadmap.* IT for Change.

Gurmurthy, A., & Chami, N. (2022). <u>Governing the Resource of Data:</u>

<u>To What End and for Whom? Conceptual Building Blocks of a Semi-Commons Approach.</u> Data Governance Network.

Gurumurthy, A., & Chami, N. (2022). Beyond Data Bodies: New

<u>Directions for a Feminist Theory of Data Sovereignty.</u> Data Governance Network

IT for Change. (2021). <u>Shiksha Vimarsh Special Issue - Digital</u> <u>technologies and Education</u>. Ed. IT for Change and Digantar. (<u>English version of the issue will be published soon</u>.)

Jose, N. (2021). <u>Supporting English Language Teaching During</u>
<u>the Pandemic</u>: <u>Experiences with Government and Aided schools</u>. English
Classroom Journal, RIESI Vol.23 no. 2

Kasinathan, G., & Dasarathy, A. (2022). <u>The EdTech leviathan</u>. *Economic & Political Weekly.* Vol 1.

Kasinathan, G. (2022). <u>Platform Capitalism and Edtech.</u> *Economic & Political Weekly.* Vol 3.

Kasinathan, G. (2021, December). *National Education Policy* 2020 – *Imagining Digital Technologies as a Resource to Achieve Educational Aims. Voices of Teachers and Teacher Educators*. Vol 10 (2).

Samuel, K., Partenio, F., & Yiping, C. (2022). <u>Diversifying Strategies for</u>
<u>Feminist Digital Activism in the Global South.</u> IT for Change and DAWN.

Sharma, A. (2021, December). <u>Digital Technologies for Developing</u>

Worksheets. Learning Curve. Azim Premji University.

Singh, P.J., Gurumurthy, A., & Chami, N. (2021). <u>Open Institutions and Their "Relevant Publics": A Democratic Alternative to Neoliberal Openness</u> in <u>Critical Perspectives on Open Development: Empirical Interrogation of Theory Construction</u>. MIT Press, IDRC.

#### **MEDIA PIECES AND FEATURES**

Amrute, S. (2021, December 17). Protecting Dissent. Bot Populi.

Athreya, B. (2021, November 20). Social Relations under Surveillance

<u>Capitalism: Is Solidarity Still Possible?</u> Bot Populi.

Bailur, S., & Ongoma, N. (2021, December 01). "I feel empowered...but

you have to have a thick skin". Bot Populi.

Bartoletti, I. (2021, December 07). Rethinking Privacy. Bot Populi.

Bernards, N. (2022, March 28). Fintech and Poverty in and Beyond the

Pandemic. Bot Populi.

Bharati, V. (2021, April 29). *Memeing Democracy*. Bot Populi.

Bharati, V. (2022, March 08). Capitalizing on Vulnerabilities: When

<u>Surveillance Capitalism Meets Mental Health</u>. Bot Populi.

Birch, K. (2022, January 19). *The Assetization of Social Life*. Bot Populi.

Chawla, A., & Joshi, D. (2021, November 19). Smart Cities in India: Of

<u>Data Governance and Democratic Deficits</u>. Bot Populi.

De Silva, A. (2022, January 05). A Platformed Response to Hate

Speech Against Women. Bot Populi.

Dunn, S. (2022, February 11). Feminist Responses to Technology-

Facilitated Violence. Bot Populi.

Faith, B. (2021, November 26). What Is Feminist Digital (In)justice? Bot

Populi.

Ganapathy, A. (2022, March 28). Fintech Wild West: Whose Duty to

Act? Bot Populi.

Gurumurthy, A. (2022, January 19). Rescuing Our Common Agenda

from the Post-democratic Abyss. Bot Populi.

Gurumurthy, A. (2021, May 28). WhatsApp Challenges Govt: Breaking

End-to-End Encryption Will Lead to Security Issues but Timing of Petition

Circumspect. Free Press Journal.

Gurumurthy, A., & Chami, N. (2021, October 25). Fixing Digital

Capitalism: Learning from China's Playbook. Bot Populi.

Gurumurthy, A., & Chami, N. (2021, October 27). Monetising data: For

whose good? Deccan Herald.

Gurumurthy, A., & Chami, N. (2022, March 26). Forging a social

contract for data. The Hindu.

Gurumurthy, A. (2021, October 08). Recognizing People's Sovereignty

over Data. Bot Populi.

Hill, R. (2021, December 03). Why is Spam a Trade Issue? Because

that Suits Dominant Developed Countries! Bot Populi.

James, D. (2021, October 01). Opportunities for Strategic Intervention.

Bot Populi.

Kasinathan, G. (2021, July 12). Online Education Is Not the Solution.

Deccan Herald.

Kasinathan, G. (2021, October 13). Covid, Folk Psychology and

Pedagogy Viruses. Deccan Herald.

Kilic, B. (2022, February 21). <u>Turkey Versus Facebook: Charting a New</u>

Pathway to Antitrust Regulation. Bot Populi.

Kirasur, N. (2022, February). Notes from the Field: How Does Aadhaar-

Enabled Welfare Delivery Exclude Women? IT for Change.

Korjan, A., & Tewari, A. (2022, January 25). *Davos 2022 and the Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Bot Populi.

Krishnakumar, S., & Korjan, A. (2021, October 27). Worker-Led Alternatives: A Line of Hope for New Platform Futures. Bot Populi.

Mahindru, T. (2021, November 22). <u>Digging Deeper: Assessing Big</u>
<u>Tech's Capture of the Internet's Infrastructure</u>. Bot Populi.

Mann, L. (2021, October 04). <u>Beyond Profit and Efficiency</u>. Bot Populi. Ricaurte, P. (2022, March 04). <u>Artificial Intelligence and the Feminist Decolonial Imagination</u>. Bot Populi.

Ricaurte, P., & Grohmann, R. (2021, October 22). <u>Data Sovereignty</u> and <u>Alternative Development Models</u>. Bot Populi.

Sharma, A. (2022). *Education Emergency: The crisis and efforts to address it.* Education World.

Sen, S. (2022, February 20). <u>Time for Upgrade: Why Competition Law</u> is Not Enough for the Platform Economy. Bot Populi.

Sinha, A., & Basu, A. (2021, August 13). Why Metaphors for Data Matter. Bot Populi.

Singh, P.J. (2022, January 03). *The Crypto Assets Conundrum*. The Hindu.

Van Den Boom, F. (2021, November 08). <u>Putting Users Back in Control</u> of Car Data to Fuel Innovations. Bot Populi.

Wani, S. M. (2021, October 08). Why India Needs a Legal Instrument to Tackle Online Hate. Bot Populi.

#### CAMPAIGNS AND INPUTS INTO POLICY PROCESSES

- Civil Society Declaration for UNCTAD XV
- Civil Society Open Letter to the WTO Director General
- Civil Society Response on Gol's IDEA Consultation Paper on Digitisation in Indian Agriculture
- Input at the Civil Society Consultation for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries
- Input on the Health Data Governance Principles
- IT for Change's Comments to the Draft National Geospatial Policy, 2021
- IT for Change's Feedback to the Draft Digital Markets Act, 2020
- IT for Change's Response to the NHA Consultation Paper on the Health Data Retention Policy
- IT for Change's Response to the NHA Consultation Paper on the Unified Health Interface
- IT for Change's Response to the Public Consultation on the Consumer Protection
  (E-commerce) Rules, 2020
- IT for Change's Response to the Public Consultation on India Digital Ecosystem of Agriculture (IDEA)
- IT for Change's Submission to the Call for Comments on the Draft Convention on the Right to Development
- Just Net Coalition's Comments and Suggestions to the Zero Draft of the Doha
   Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries
- Representation Against NUE Licenses for Corporations like Amazon

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Project, Flaticon, Canva, Unsplash, &
Freepik
Layout Design: Indu Manohar

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