Think Pieces 2024

Gender and Digital Inclusion

Call for Proposals

IT for Change invites applications for think pieces under the project, 'Re-wiring India's Digitalising Economy for Women's Rights and Well-being,' supported by the European Commission and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. We seek well-established, mid to senior-career scholars and researchers who identify as women, with a proven track record of publishing on the digital economy and gender.

1. Background

The flow of digital data has expanded exponentially in recent times (Kitchin 2014), precipitating widespread techno-optimism about the promise the digital economy holds in diverse contexts (Issaka 2023), without sufficient cognisance of the gendered impacts of its functioning.

As an ordering infrastructure that is rapidly transforming the global economic order, data has ostensibly streamlined governance practices, sped up the consolidation of economic gains by private and state capital, and simplified inter-sectoral processes and operations.

Its gains have not however come without numerous misgivings and adverse outcomes for the most disenfranchised. Feminist analyses have indicated the inequalities inherent in the inclusion of diverse constituencies of people into the digital economy, when underlying relationships of power have been unaccounted for in the design and deployment of digital technologies and policies. Social exclusion has been shown to precipitate, reinforce, and be reinforced by the exclusionary patterns that have emerged from these new digitalities, especially for historically marginalized communities (Ragnedda et al. 2022). This is especially true for women, who are overrepresented in invisibilised spaces such as the informal economy, care work, and the political margins. Women face digitally-mediated barriers to full participation in economic, political, and social life and are consequently unable to exercise their citizenship.

In the absence of a parallel transformation of underlying structural conditions, interconnected networks of finance capital, global capital, regulatory regimes, and local practice, digital technologies and infrastructures have often resulted in continued and exacerbated patterns of gendered exclusion. These have been manifested in undemocratic data governmentality, especially algorithmic practices that pose challenges to civil liberties, exclusions from social protection, and co-option on unfair terms into the digital economy.

For instance, platform marketplaces, with their promise of low barriers to entry and flexibility have often reinforced existing biases and inequalities of income, with inadequate recourse to labour protections and social security ([Dewan and Sanyal, 2023](#)). Without overarching legislation that challenges existing gendered hierarchies and precarities in the labour market, women find themselves once again relegated to gender-segregated economic roles, and the double burden of economic and care work ([Gurumurthy, Chami, Billorou, 2018](#)).

Attending to the potentially adverse outcomes of digital inclusion requires that we confront the built-in inequalities in existing social, political, legal and economic systems to design digital infrastructures for gender equitable, alternative planetary futures.

2. Objective of this call

We invite six, **5000-6000 word** (excluding graphs, tables and references), previously unpublished think pieces, based on original scholarship, that adopt critical, feminist approaches to the interactions of digital inclusion infrastructures, practices and policies with the economic, political and social citizenship of women.

Themes to address include but are not limited to the following:

1. Case studies on material, regulatory, and labor underpinnings of digital inclusion efforts

2. Case studies on successfully addressing exclusion challenges

3. Policy responses to address digital inequalities

4. Politics of digital inclusion infrastructures

5. Entanglements of labor and bodies with digitalized social security

6. Methods to make visible and legible inclusions and exclusions

7. Data protection practices and standards

8. Inclusive digital finance services

9. Digital competencies for inclusion in the digital economy

Contributions will be published on our website. All outputs will be licensed under a CC BY SA 4.0 license.

3. Timeline

Call for Proposals	29 July 2024
Applications Due	**20 August 2024**
Communication of Decision	30 August 2024
Fellowships Commence	10 September 2024
First Draft Due	15 November 2024
Final Draft Due	**15 December 2024**

Please note that we are unable to accommodate requests for extensions of the final due date.

4. Who Can Apply?

We seek well-established, mid to senior- career scholars and researchers who identify as women, with a track record of publishing on the digital economy and gender.

Applicants can be located anywhere in the world, but must be able to legally receive funds and work in their location. We encourage scholars with expertise in the European Union, African, and Asian regions to apply.

5. Remuneration

A remuneration of €3,900 will be disbursed in full on submission of the final draft.

6. Application Process

Please send a proposal for the think piece and your academic CV in a single PDF file to **itfcthinkpieces2024@itforchange.net** by **20th August, 2024**.

The proposal should include: :

1. An extended abstract which includes the title of the project, author(s) introduction, material and methods, results and discussion, conclusion and references (700-1000 words)

2. A short statement on how the think piece addresses the question of digital infrastructures and inclusion (100 words)

Applications will be assessed for their theoretical rigour, originality, their contribution to the existing scholarship on gender and digital inclusion, as well as geographic focus. Priority will be given to applications that include analyses of the European Union, African, and Asian regions.