ICT as a Tool for Women Empowerment in Developing Countries: Peru & Afghanistan

Goals of development: “Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women”

Latest research (Wagner, 2017; Cia Alves, 2017; Castillo, 2017) have shown that not stakeholders should worry about ICT access, but rather in the content they are having access to.

The definition of empowerment includes agency in women that means acting in one’s own behalf to make own choices (Kaaber, 2015).

Afghanistan is a male-dominated space (Rahman, 2017) has a low-income economy with one of the highest index of gender inequality in the world (World Bank, 2015).

Women in Afghanistan are facing social changes: Life in a context that is socially and politically unstable → Accessing more opportunities but at the same time facing strong cultural resistance.

Only small part of the sample used ICTs to question patriarchal goals, looking for rights about divorce, issues of domestic violence or pursuing romantic relationship of their own choice and interest. (Hussain & Amin, 2018; Rahman, 2017)

Access is not as important as agency and context. For example, Peru is one of the most emerging economies in Latin America, people are having more access to technological devices but social factors as patriarchal societies are still getting in the way. Afghanistan there are also many project that give people access to ICT but women are not using this tools to empower themselves because they are hindered by a male-dominated society.

Conclusions/Implications

- When comparing such different countries as Afghanistan and Peru that have distinct religious, cultural, and political situations there are some similarities that can help us draw a line to base gender and technology future projects.
- Despite the efforts of various non-profit organisms and governments, this development trends to be uneven sometimes even between same countries and different social groups, so capturing the net effects is a complex task (Cia Alves & Quirinos, 2016).
- Control over ICT is an analogy of the patriarchal control that men have over women, as the research led by Farhana Rahman (2017) argues that when women start fighting for their control over ICT it will be a first step for their empowerment.