



# Global Forum on Youth and ICT for Development

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*ICT as an instrument for the empowerment of  
young women and girls: reflections from field-  
projects in India*



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# What kind of empowerment?

- It's not just about **ACCESS AND BUILDING CAPACITIES!!**
- It involves “*the expansion in peoples' ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them*” (Kabeer 2001)
- A **politicised** approach involving:
  - women's assertion of **rights**, agency and mobilisation
  - transformation of the broader enabling environment or **institutional** structure

# Why talk about ICTs for the empowerment of young girls?

- ICTs are re-defining all aspects of social life; re-constituting systems and processes; and are *potentially* empowering and transformatory
- **BUT HOW??** ICTs need to be conceived as a **springboard for gender equality**, wherein young girls' participation in ICTD projects:
  - positively impacts individual **identity** and perceptions of self
  - challenges gendered social **roles** within the local context
  - transforms institutional spaces such that women become legitimate **claimants** in the development process

# What kind of frameworks support the empowerment of girls through ICTs?

- Women not just in implementation but in central **leadership** roles
- Project design choices directly address gendered **power** relations and social inclusion aspects
- ‘Community’ is not just users or beneficiaries but are made stakeholders through their **ownership** of and **responsibility** for the initiative
- ‘Success’ defined not by financial viability or number of transactions but in terms of creating new **roles** and new **institutional norms** that further gender equality
- A strong role for public policy in formalising and institutionalising gender concerns