



# YOUNG WOMEN LEADING TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

The first youth roundtable by the Generation Equality Action Coalition for Technology and Innovation hosted by Digital Grassroots

27 JANUARY 2021

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 'Young Women Leading Tech and Innovation' was a youth roundtable hosted by the Generation Equality Action Leaders Digital Grassroots on 27th January 2021. The 90-minute session was attended by over 190 participants from at least 30 countries from across the globe. It featured four keynote speakers who brought their perspectives to four key priority areas of the Action Coalition for Technology and Innovation:

- **Valentina Muñoz Rabanal** (Chile), Programmer and president of AMUJI, talked about the development of gender-transformative tech solutions.
- **Somaya Faruqi** (Afghanistan), Leader of the Afghan Girls Robotic Team, talked about bridging the gender gap in digital access and literacy.
- **Jianne Soriano** (Hong Kong), Advocate for Women and Ethnic Minorities, Youth4IG Outreach Lead, talked about building safe digital spaces for women, free from abuse.
- **Charlette N'Guessan** (Ivory Coast), CEO of BACE Group, talked about building inclusive innovation ecosystems.

The youth roundtable opened with **Audrey Fontaine**, member of the Generation Equality Youth Task Force. Representatives from Digital Grassroots, **Uffa Modey and Esther Mwema**, gave opening and closing remarks, and **Anouchka Dybal** (Action Coalitions Secretariat, UN Women) moderated the session.

The roundtable was built as an interactive dialogue which provided participants with the opportunity to share their views and react to the speakers' inspiring statements. The roundtable started with a powerful video presentation on how girls have relied on mobile phones and technology during the COVID-19 pandemic, from the "[Hear Her Voice](#)" Project by The Girl Effect.

Prior to the roundtable, we asked the community of young people to take part in the '**Innovate 2021' artwork**. The art contributions were presented in the introduction, as seen on the cover of this report. They touched on themes about the planet, our vision of our **environment, online education** especially in the context of **COVID-19, STEM, justice and discrimination**, and young people's collective vision of our near future. We received 37 contributions from at least 25 countries.

During the webinar, we asked participants to contribute their aspirations for technology and innovation in 2021. The following chart summarizes the responses from session participants:



This report aims to summarize the key outcomes of the youth roundtable by spotlighting the demands of young women in technology and innovation. Session participants highlighted their core priorities for each proposed action through live polling.

It is our hope that this report inspires collective action for gender equality across the Generation Equality Action Coalitions platforms to involve young people in the drafting and implementation of the final blueprint.

## OUTCOMES OF THE YOUTH ROUNDTABLE

### STEMINISM: TECHNOLOGY AS A FEMINIST SPACE

Valentina Muñoz Rabanal, Programmer and president of AMUJI



Photo: Valentina Muñoz Rabanal / UN Women

Valentina Muñoz Rabanal  
PRESIDENT OF AMUJI CHILE



Valentina, 18, is a three-time regional champion, national and world champion in the international robotics competition First LEGO League. Founder of the Secretariat of Gender and Sexuality Diversity of Liceo Carmela Carvajal (Sedigesex) and of the Association of Young Women for Ideas (@amuji.chile). She is currently President of the organization AMUJI and has been elected as one of the 7 most influential young people in Chile in 2020, by Ashoka.

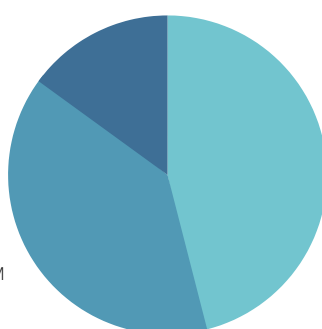
### Core Priorities Valentina wants for the Action Coalition for Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality:

1. PROMOTING DIGITAL RIGHTS INTERNATIONALLY
2. RECOGNIZE AND GIVE VISIBILITY TO OUTSTANDING YOUNG WOMEN IN STEM
3. SETTING UP INSTANCES OF INTER-GENERATIONAL DIALOGUES WITH STATES

### Participants' main focus from Valentina's core priorities:

Setting up instances of intergenerational dialogues with States  
15%

Recognizing young women in STEM  
39%



Promoting digital rights internationally  
46%



## BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP IN DIGITAL ACCESS AND LITERACY

### Somaya Faruqi, Leader of the Afghan Girls Robotics Team



Photo: Somaya Faruqi / UN Women



We convinced our government to build the first STEM school for girls in Afghanistan. This STEM school will make a real change for the new generation, and maybe we will have new coaches and mentors that will graduate from this school.

**Somaya Faruqi**  
LEADER OF THE AFGHAN GIRLS ROBOTICS TEAM

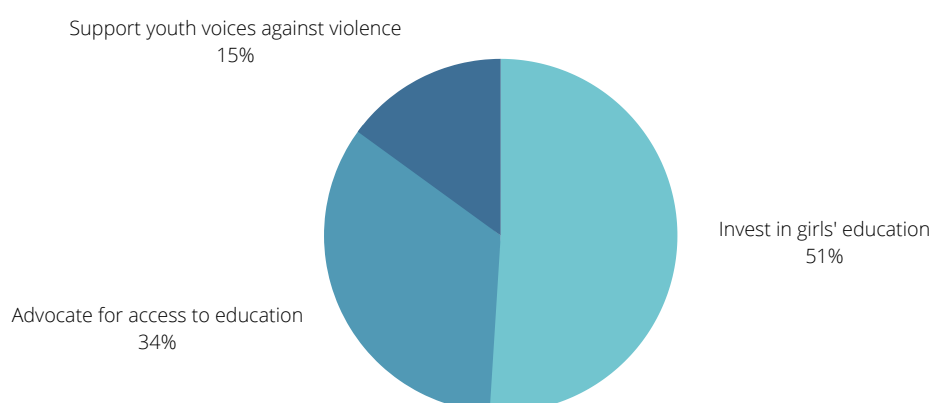


Somaya, 18, led the Girl's Robotic Team, consisting of five girls from Herat, Western Afghanistan, to develop a prototype ventilator. The creative idea was born of despair and a desire to support her country's health system at a time of COVID-19 crisis, when a limited number of ventilators across the country threatened the most vulnerable. She successfully influenced her government to build the first STEM school for girls in Afghanistan. In November 2020, she was chosen as one of the BBC's 100 most inspiring and influential women of the year -- globally.

### Core Priorities Somaya wants for the Action Coalition for Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality:

1. ADVOCATE FOR ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR ALL GIRLS
2. INVEST IN EDUCATION, IN PARTICULAR GIRLS' EDUCATION
3. SUPPORT YOUTH VOICES AGAINST ANY KIND OF VIOLENCE

### Participants' main focus from Somaya's core priorities:



## HOW TO MAKE DIGITAL SPACES SAFER AND BETTER ADDRESS DISCRIMINATION?

Jianne Soriano, Advocate for Women, Ethnic Minorities and Youth4IG Outreach Lead

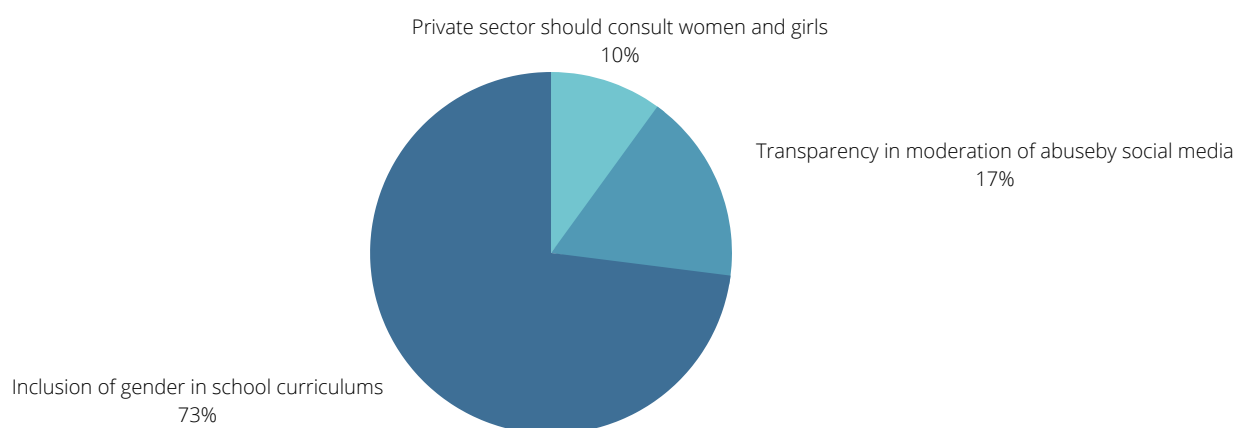


Jianne, 24, is an advocate for women and ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. She got involved with the Internet Governance Forum in 2013 (Bali) after producing a research on the relationship of suicide rates to cyberbullying. She attended various global, regional IGFs, and organized several regional Youth IGFs. She is currently Outreach Lead & Mentorship Program Co-chair at Youth4IG. In this capacity, she has contributed to policy discussions including ICANN, in local, regional and global dialogues. She was listed in The Loop's 30 Under 30 list that highlights young professionals in Hong Kong who achieved great success in their respective fields.

### Core Priorities Jianne wants for the Action Coalition for Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality:

1. PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD FORMULATE PROPER WAYS TO INCLUDE WOMEN AND YOUNG GIRLS IN DISCUSSIONS AND CONSULTATIONS
2. SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES NEED TO BE MORE TRANSPARENT IN THEIR MODERATION AND REPORTING OF ONLINE ABUSE FACED BY WOMEN
3. COUNTRIES NEED TO WORK WITH THE EDUCATION SECTOR TO INCLUDE GENDER ISSUES INTO THE CURRICULUM

### Participants' main focus from Jianne's core priorities:



## CHALLENGES OF THE AFRICAN TECH ECOSYSTEM

Charlette N'Guessan, Ivory Coast, CEO of The BACE Group



Photo: Charlette N'Guessan / UN Women



African leaders need to ask themselves how they can help create an ecosystem that supports young people to become tech entrepreneurs and need to harmonize their regulations.

**Charlette N'Guessan**  
CEO OF THE BACE GROUP



Charlette, 26, is a tech entrepreneur who collaborates with various organizations that strongly advocate for gender balance in the tech ecosystem. She has a degree in Electronic and Software Engineering and certified in data science and machine learning by Worldquant University. Also, she is a certified digital identity and co-author of the AI BOOK published by Wiley in April 2020. She is passionate about solving problems using technology. She is the co-founder and CEO of BACE GROUP, a startup that provides AI-powered facial recognition services for online identity verification. She was the first woman to win the Royal Academy of Engineering's Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation.

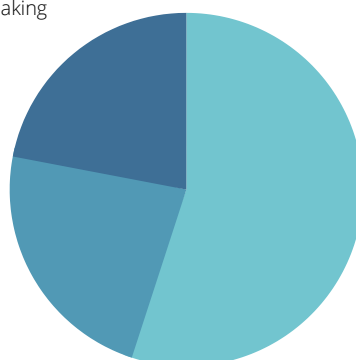
### Core Priorities Charlette wants for the Action Coalition for Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality:

1. CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO GET PRACTICAL SKILLS AND EXPERTISE TO BETTER POSITION THEMSELVES IN THE MARKETPLACE
2. INVEST IN AND SUPPORT LOCAL INNOVATION
3. ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND AGES TO ENSURE DIVERSITY IN DECISION-MAKING IN BUSINESS

### Participants' main focus from Charlette's core priorities:

Engage diverse stakeholders in business decision-making  
22%

Invest in local innovation  
23%



Create more opportunities for practical skills  
55%

## NEXT STEPS

During the session, we presented the following as the priority goals which the Generation Equality Action Coalition for Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality has set out to achieve. In brief, as follows:

- Generate more opportunities for **women and girls to be innovators** and develop transformative solutions
- **Remove the barriers** preventing women and girls to equally access digital technologies and learn digital competences
- Build innovation ecosystems where young women can thrive and attain their **maximum leadership potential**
- **Eliminate the abuse** faced by women and girls online and make sure technology is not used to further discriminate

We set out to achieve the above set priorities by:

- Building a movement to drive a more equal and inclusive digital transformation
- Identify concrete actions to be implemented by a community of changemaker
- Mobilize leaders to make bold commitments

### **To contribute to the Action Coalitions and engage with us :**

- Join the Action Coalition as a Commitment-Maker : a one-year commitment to participate in the design of the Action Coalitions. The model will be launched mid-February 2021.
- Contribute to the **Generation Equality Public Conversation platform**, dedicated to mobilizing the public around critical issues of equity and justice within their communities and providing ideas for a catalogue of commitments for all leaders of the Action Coalitions :  
<https://gef-public-platform.in.howspace.com/>

- **Stay tuned:**

 [HTTPS://FORUM.GENERATIONEQUALITY.ORG/](https://forum.generationequality.org/)

 @UN\_Women, @ONUMujeres, @ONUFemmes

 @unwomen, @onumujeres, @onufemmes

 [UN Women](#)



Special thanks to all the attendees for your active participation and contribution to the success of this roundtable. We would also like to thank UN Women, the leaders of the Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality for their support, with a special mention to UNICEF, Digital Grassroots, our notable speakers, all who contributed to the artwork, and all who have contributed to the inclusion of youth in technology and innovation.

#### **UN Women Staff:**

Helene Molinier  
Anouchka Dybal  
Gabrielle Leite

#### **Digital Grassroots:**

Esther Mwema  
Uffa Modey

#### **GEF Youth Task Force:**

Audrey Fontaine

#### **Speakers:**

Valentina Muñoz Rabanal  
Somaya Faruqi  
Jianne Soriano  
Charlette N'Guessan

#### **Artwork Contributors:**

Priyadharsini Palaniswamy, India  
Milouda Bouichou, Morocco  
Tania Palacios Crespo, Ecuador  
Carolina Janet Amable Ventura, Peru  
Merrill Keating, USA  
Laura Moncada, Venezuela  
Danha Alejandra Alvarado Jimenez, Guatemala  
Lucia Morales, Guatemala  
Marline Bilgaï Grand Jean, Haïti  
Geeta Belpatre, India  
Khalifa L. Dunor  
Beatrice Waithera Wanjiru, Kenya  
Astou Ndiaye, Senegal  
Marie Audrey Beugre, Cote d'Ivoire  
Yah Hanguine, Mali  
Agita Pasaribu, Indonesia  
Reotshepile Mmutle

Cinndy Gabriela Oroxom Pacajoj, Guatemala  
Sena Ada Ertürk, Turkey  
Faith Kamene Muema, Kenya  
Marijose Laureano Rivera, Mexico  
Idil Kula, Turkey  
Kamila D. Tarazona, USA  
Nesta Bebb  
Elinor Bebb  
Alisson Stefany Morales Bonilla, Ecuador  
Raphasha Mohibudi, South Africa  
Raajika Das, India  
Sudha Srivastava, UK  
Dominique Ogoreanu, Romania  
Kemberly Samantha Padilla Cruz, Honduras  
Jeanette Uddoh, Nigeria  
Andrea Morales, Mexico  
Gcinithemba Sherilyn Maphosa, Zimbabwe  
Pilar Estela Tancacalle Mita, Bolivia  
Sara Toro Zapata, Colombia  
Pacis-Alarine Irambona, Burundi