

The background is a vibrant, textured quilted landscape. At the top, there's a quilted sky with geometric patterns in shades of grey, black, and white. Below it, a blue river flows across the scene, with a small boat carrying a person. The middle ground features various green and yellow patches representing trees and fields. At the bottom, there are purple and pink floral-like shapes. The overall texture is that of a soft, woolen fabric.

MOVEMENT BUILDING IN A DIGITAL AGE: EVALUATION REPORT

Learnings for networks



APC
ASSOCIATION FOR
PROGRESSIVE
COMMUNICATIONS

Prepared by Sheherezade Kara
(independent consultant)
www.human-writes.org

Cover collage by Flavia Fascendini

Between November 2019 and April 2020, the APC Women's Rights Programme (WRP) held an evaluation of our work around movement building in the digital age. We want to extend our appreciation to everyone who contributed thoughts, experiences and ideas through the survey and/or interviews – THANK YOU to all 82 people who took the time to share your feedback!

Your contributions provided valuable input in assessing our strategies moving forward, not only for how we can strengthen our internal programming, but also in how we can better support the feminist internet network. In the spirit of transparency and reciprocation, we want to share what we heard from you, and how we intend to respond.

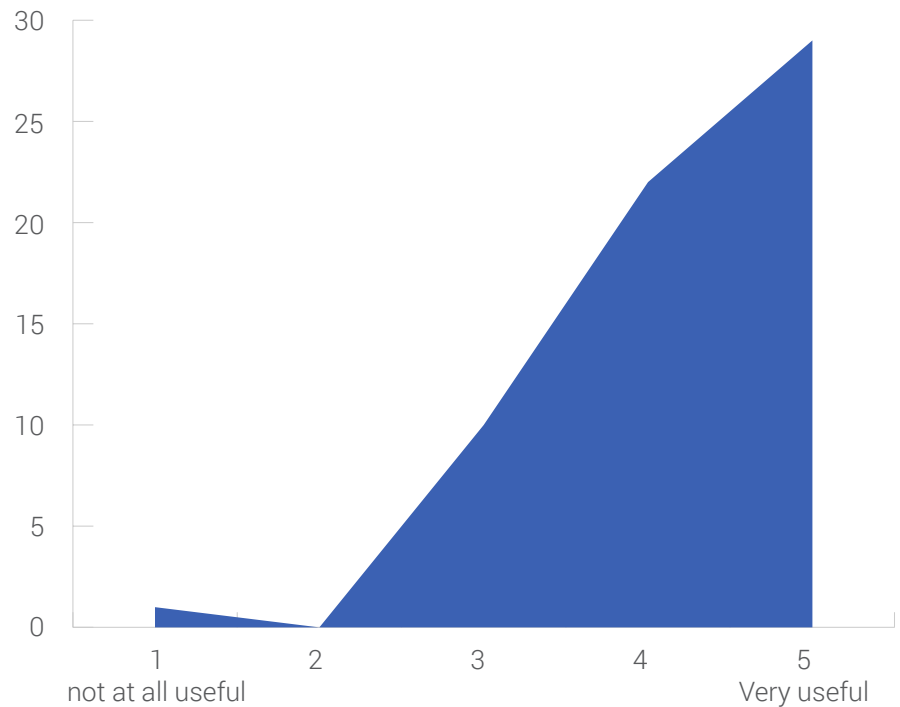
WHAT WILL CONTINUE?

Feminist Principles of the Internet (FPIs)

The survey indicated that 82% of respondents found the FPIs to be “useful” or “very useful” in their work, with the Principles predominantly being used as reference tools, conceptual guides, and in trainings and workshops. Some respondents also used the FPIs as a reference for digital security concerns or for campaigning. Nearly two thirds of survey respondents engaged with the FPI website (<https://feministinternet.net/>) every six months or more often.

WRP will continue to expand our work around the FPIs, and will continue to develop focus on particular themes such as the environment, care and memory/archiving.

On a scale of 1 to 5 , how useful have the FPIs been in your work?

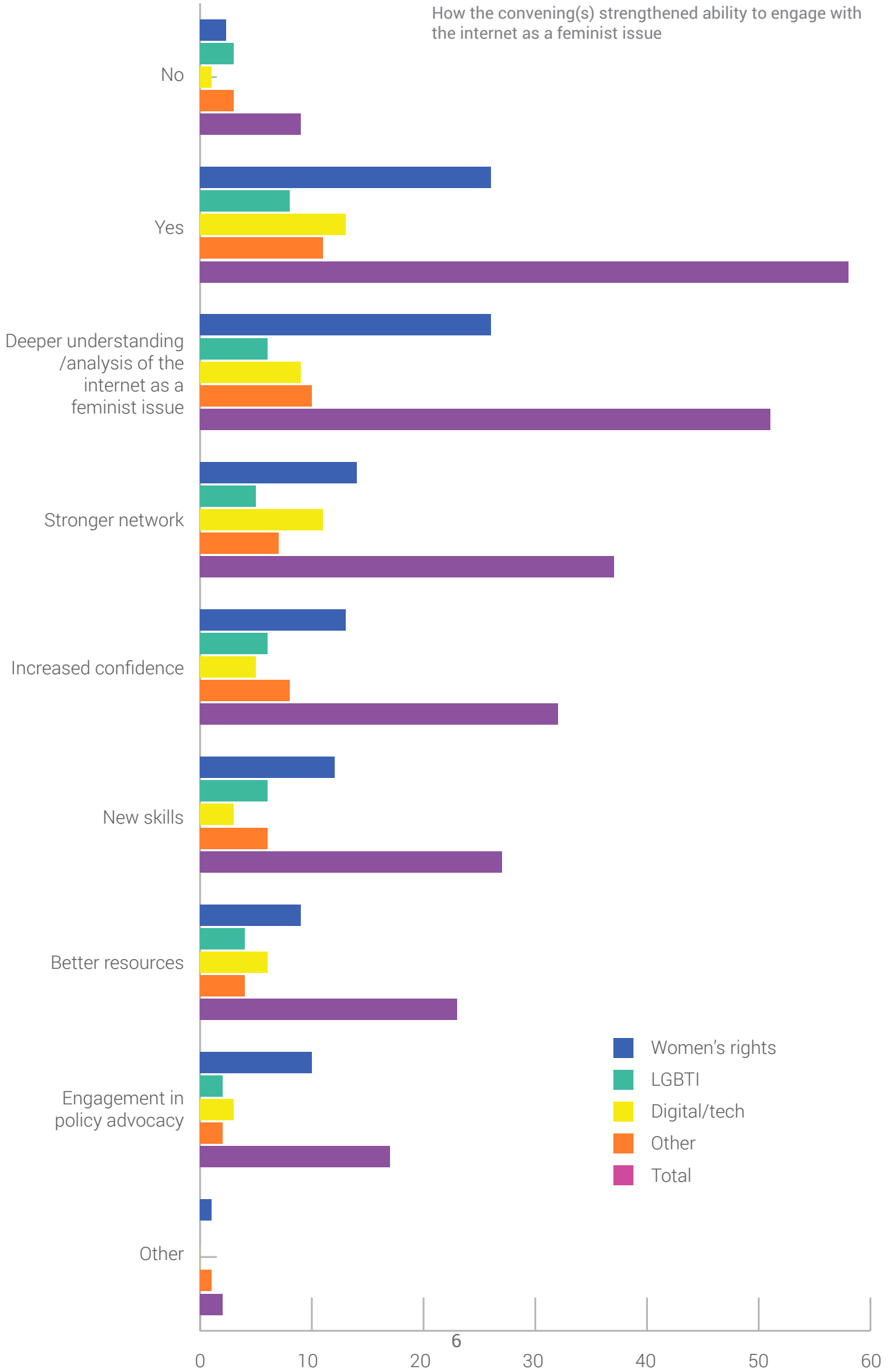


Bringing people together

We received very encouraging feedback on our in-person gatherings and convenings, with many participants expressing appreciation for our content and facilitation style. A total of 87% of respondents to the survey told us the convenings strengthened their ability to engage with the internet as a feminist issue that links to their activism and context, while 78% formed new collaborations from the meetings. Interviewees noted positive impact in relation to networking, political and feminist analysis, their understanding of movement building and the importance of digital security, access to resources, funding, as well as facilitation styles, self/collective care and confidence. Last but not least, 97% of survey respondents would like to participate in more WRP convenings/initiatives!

Based on this feedback, we will continue to hold spaces for people to come together, to share, explore, play and imagine. In the coming years, we intend to hold more local, regional and issue-based conversations – we look forward to seeing you there!

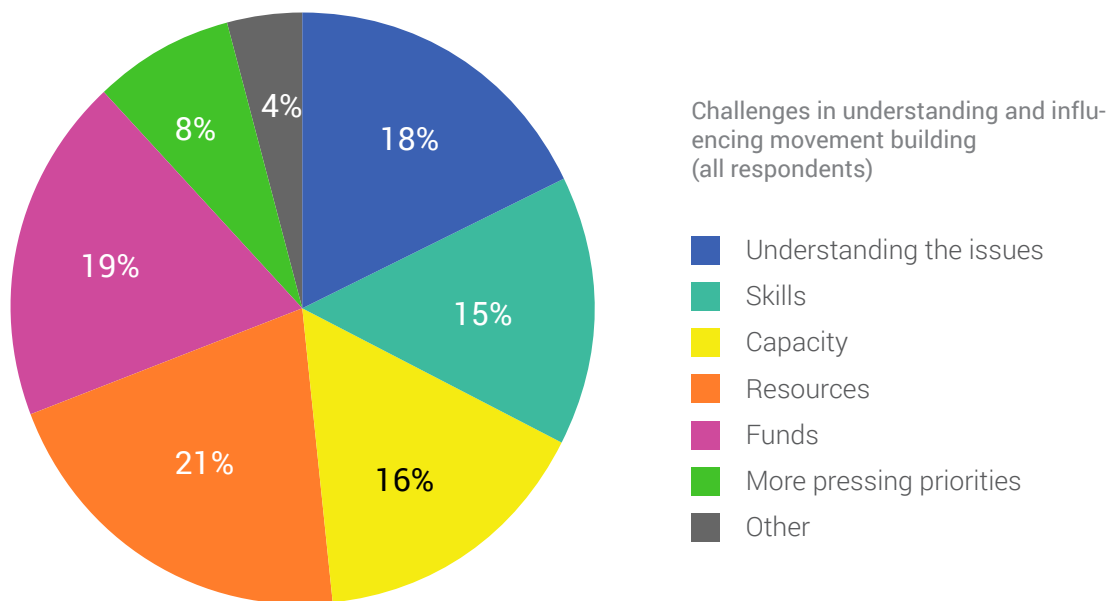
How the convening(s) strengthened ability to engage with the internet as a feminist issue



Donor advocacy

Building networks, movements and collaborations was identified as the main gap/opportunity in relation to movement building in a digital age. However, respondents to our survey indicated that access to resources and funds were the top two challenges in understanding and influencing movement building in the digital age. Interviewees working in grant-giving noted that their participation in WRP meetings expanded their understanding of activism, changed the way they see movement building, and helped them to advocate among funders for more attention to the intersections of gender and technology.

WRP recognises ongoing donor advocacy as a priority to support our collective work. We will continue to work with donors to strengthen their understanding of and responses to the changing nature of organising in the digital age, as well as to channel resources toward the feminist internet community.



WHAT WILL EVOLVE?

Developing the accessibility of our online resources and spaces

The survey identified access to resources as a key challenge in understanding and influencing movement building in the digital age, while respondents also indicated their will to share research, content, knowledge and other resources. Through interviews, we heard that WRP's online resources, content and spaces could be more accessible and user-friendly for diverse audiences. Interviewees also raised the need for stronger resources and toolkits, which were seen as crucial for movement building.

Moving forward, we intend to produce and publish more user-friendly content, balancing theory and practice, while focusing on documenting and archiving experiences, perspectives and knowledge from the global South. We hope to make our content useable and accessible to feminists, techies, and other activists and allies who might be curious about the feminist internet and movement building in the digital age. As always, we will seek to showcase materials and tools produced by feminist internet networkers from the global South.

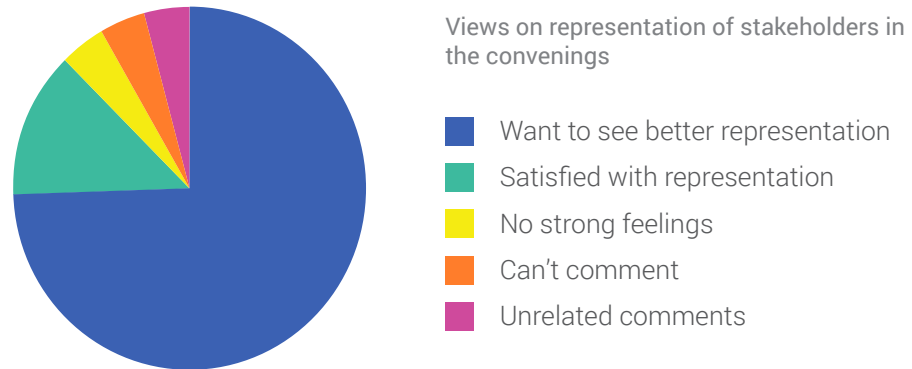
Strengthening outreach to different stakeholder groups

The evaluation confirmed an increase in awareness around online activism and digital practice, with 82% of survey respondents indicating they shifted their politics or practice in how they engage with digital technologies and the internet in their work. Interviewees indicated a desire to move toward discussion of feminist technologies and infrastructures, while survey respondents wanted more opportunities to share technological skills and knowledge.

In planning the feminist internet convenings, WRP aimed to bring together digital, women's and sexual rights activists, as well as funders and other key stakeholders. The survey asked if any key perspectives were missing, and if so, which groups could be better represented. In all, 73% of respondents wanted to see better representation, with just over half wanting better inclusion of people from LGBTIQ communities.

WRP is committed to growing the base of activists interested and engaged in movement building in a digital age. Based on the feedback we intend to strengthen our relationships with experts on certain key issues, including feminist techies and trans activists (and others

working on gender, sexual or bodily diversity). We also intend to build on our regional and local Making a Feminist Internet convenings, maintaining the focus on global South experiences. We will continue to develop conversations and networks in Africa, and we will particularly seek to reach more stakeholders who are based in the Middle East and North Africa.



Network building

We received clear feedback on needing to strengthen the feminist internet network, with interest in and also some frustration among contributors wanting to better connect and collaborate with others. Some contributors suggested ways that WRP could facilitate introductions and collaborations between their contacts, particularly outside of the convenings. The mailing list was appreciated, but was also not seen as fulfilling a need for transparent and open networks.

WRP is encouraged by the willingness to develop the network beyond WRP-held spaces. We recognise our limited capacity in connecting partners and facilitating collaborations on an ongoing basis, and would also like to see the nature and form of the network evolve and expand. We will be exploring ways to develop the network's infrastructures, to encourage collective ownership and strengthen lines of communication between networkers. This exploratory and evolving work around feminist infrastructures will build on digital safety, while also encompassing broader movement infrastructures beyond the technical.

Sustainability of the team

Internal interviews for the evaluation as well as external feedback reminded us of the need to consider our collective care and sustainability as a team. Balancing our existing resources with commitments to the work and the network remains a challenge.

We recognise the need to augment our staff capacity. We will seek to bring a new person into the team, to hold work around communications, technical capacity (including around feminist infrastructures) and/or network building.

TOWARDS COLLECTIVE AND DISTRIBUTED OWNERSHIP

We were encouraged that the evaluation revealed a great energy and willingness of the network to build on the feminist internet and movement building work. We also heard the frustration of those who wanted more dedicated a-up from the convenings. Movements are strongest when energy comes from a multitude of spaces and actors. WRP must not be the only driver of this movement, and we would like to support collective ownership, leadership, thinking and imagining around this work.

While recognising that WRP has more access to resources than much of the feminist internet community at present, we also want you to continue walking these paths with us. As such, we call on the community to continue working toward a feminist internet in the spaces you occupy. Please consider ways to contribute to making the online spaces useful for solidarity, support, play and holding. We invite you to ongoing imagining of what a feminist internet looks like in the spaces we build and occupy together.

We recognise that it is not healthy for one organisation to hold leadership of this work. We seek your involvement to develop a self-sustaining and nurturing network with collective leadership and efforts. Our goal is to build distributed power and shared ownership, sharing how we shape and make our common future. Within this, we recognise the need for intermediary steps and will be supporting working groups, coalitions and other formations focusing on collective priorities. We will continue to hold processes and spaces, as well as providing subgrants and developing participatory grant making with this strategy in mind.

Once again, we thank you for the time and effort you contributed to this evaluation. We look forward to working with you on the next steps of our shared vision!

If you have any questions about the evaluation or outcomes, please feel free to contact us at info@apcwomen.org

