



EQUITABLE AI COMMUNITY



The Equitable AI Newsletter

May 2023

Upcoming Events

Please join us for the first convening of the full Community of Practice (CoP) on Wednesday, May 31!

INTEGRATING GENDER EQUITY INTO DEVELOPMENT & HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE APPLICATIONS OF AI
WEDNESDAY, MAY 31 | 10:00 - 11:00 AM EST

Image taken from USAID Machine Learning Report: Photo Credit: Kelly Lynch.

Working in AI and wondering how to better integrate gender equity into practical and scalable applications of AI in international development? Join us for our first Equitable AI Community of Practice (CoP) convening on **Wednesday, May 31st**. This virtual workshop will explore the integration of gender equity into practical and scalable applications of AI focused on international development (ID) and humanitarian assistance. The session will feature a presentation on equitable AI by USAID Gender & AI Fellow Genevieve Smith, and multiple flash presentations from organizations working to advance equitable AI that will describe challenges and solutions to developing and deploying equitable AI in international development applications. Presenters will include the [PIT Policy Lab](#) from USAID's [Equitable AI Challenge](#). The session will include collaborative discussion that builds on issues raised in last month's CWG session for participants to share opportunities and challenges within the AI - international development community.

Please register for the event [at this link](#).

Past Events

Core Working Group Session 1

On Wednesday, April 19th, the Equitable AI Community of Practice, hosted by USAID, DAI, and the Atlantic Council GeoTech Center, held its first Core Working Group session, focused on navigating bias throughout the AI lifecycle.

The event began with a presentation by USAID Gender and AI Fellow, Genevieve Smith. Ms. Smith provided insight into why artificial intelligence systems are biased in development and application, the varied impacts biases have when deployed, and strategies to mitigate AI bias. She noted that since most of the datasets for AI

systems originate in the Global North and operate on a gender binary, the resulting AI systems perpetuate biases embedded in those contexts. Biased AI systems can result in unfair resource allocation, detriment to safety, reinforcement of prejudice, and economic inefficiencies and losses. Suggested solutions to mitigate these biases include enabling diverse and multi-disciplinary development teams, promoting a culture of responsible AI, and establishing corporate governance practices for end-to-end bias mitigation.

Following the keynote, the core working group split into small group sessions to discuss factors that perpetuate bias in AI within their own work and possible solutions to mitigate this bias. Participants highlighted challenges including data gaps, incentivizing the private sector to practice responsible AI, lack of bias and data privacy education throughout the AI development lifecycle, and lack of transparency, monitoring, and evaluation in AI algorithms and deployments. Suggested solutions to mitigate bias included synthetic datasets, lifecycle auditing, quality assurance testing, collective governance, responsible procurement, and education and guardrails promoting risk awareness and human-centered AI.

In upcoming CoP sessions, our community will build on this discussion by continuing to identify challenges and opportunities in the AI policy space. We encourage you to consider the takeaways listed above as you interact with AI in your own work!

Critical Reads

Just Published



Photo credit: Jack Gordon, USAID/Digital Development Communications

How USAID Encourages Private Sector Partners to Tackle AI's Most Critical Challenges - USAID, May 2023

Artificial intelligence (AI) is not neutral; instead, it involves lots of human decisions that profoundly impact how AI systems are designed and implemented. As a result, AI can work well for some and not for others. Researchers and activists have identified numerous instances of inequitable design, use, and impact of AI-enabled tools in low- and middle-income countries. Diverse collaboration through public-private partnerships can help recognize deficiencies in the technology, but encouraging these partnerships is a challenge in itself. Check out our recent blog highlighting the Equitable AI Community's successes and challenges with private-public partnerships to advance development outcomes.

Suggested Long Reads

USAID's Artificial Intelligence Action Plan - USAID, May 2022

Playbook: Mitigating Bias in Artificial Intelligence - Berkeley Haas Center for Equity, Gender, and Leadership

Responsible Language in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning - Berkeley Haas Center for Equity, Gender, and Leadership, October 2021

Must-See Articles

When Good Algorithms go Sexist: Why and How to Advance AI Gender Equity - Stanford Social Innovation Review, March 2021

Harnessing the potential of artificial intelligence for humanitarian action: Opportunities and risks - International Review of the Red Cross, June 2022

How Five Awardees Are Paving the Way for a More Equitable AI-Powered Future - USAID, June 2022

3 strategies to leverage AI in the development sector - World Economic Forum, October 2022

The 'AI Divide' between the Global North and the Global South - World Economic Forum, November 2022

Upcoming Events/Opportunities

AfricAI Conference - June 12-14, 2023

FAccT Conference - June 12-15, 2023

RightsCon - June 5-8, 2023

Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization Conference

- October 30-November 1, 2023

Videos

AI in International Development - Paris Peace Forum, 2022

Local Impact: USAID's Equitable AI Challenge in Action

Itad and Partners Will Publish Critical AI Resources: AI Ethics Guide and Checklist

While government agencies can use AI to address urgent social challenges, such tools demand innovative approaches to reduce gender biases and discrimination caused by AI technologies, ensure gender-equitable outcomes, and improve critical interventions that allow citizens to access life-enhancing services. The potential for AI systems to replicate privacy violations, enable anti-competitive commercial outcomes, and reinforce existing biases propelled the Itad, in partnership with Women in Digital Transformation (WinDT), PIT Policy Lab, and Athena Infonomics, to develop an Ethical Guide and Checklist to ensure policymakers in Guanajuato

and beyond understood the risks of AI adoption. learning studies. **Be on the lookout for these soon-to-be-published resources.**

From Mexico to India: Promoting South to South Cooperation in Operationalizing Equitable AI

This event, hosted as part of USAID's Equitable AI Challenge, featured lessons learned from a use case by the PIT Policy Lab and Women in Digital Transformation as part of a consortium led by Itad to promote an equitable approach to the deployment of an AI-based Early Alert System to prevent school dropout, in partnership with the Ministry of Education in Guanajuato, Mexico. Indian State Government and sector leaders were then invited to give presentations and join in a panel discussion on equitable and ethical governance and deployment of AI technologies.

Video of the event is available [at this link](#).

Investors Funding AI Projects Will Get a New Equitable AI Guide for Inclusive Finance

The Center for Financial Inclusion (CFI) finalized “Investing in Equitable AI for Inclusive Finance: A Conversational Guide for Impact Investors,” a working draft on equitable AI for impact investors. This guide is a result of the interviews conducted with investors in Fall 2022 as well as a two-part literature review that included a deep-dive into practical tools and checklists. This guide will be available soon.

For questions on Equitable AI Community grants, reach out to Priya Sethi at priya_sethi@dai.com.

PIT Policy Lab hosts USAID Colleagues in Guanajuato, Mexico



Stephen Ladek, ITAD; Mike Klein, Athena Infonomics, Cristina Martinez Pinto and Edgar Aparicio Gonzalez, PIT Policy Lab hosted a site visit with USAID in Mexico as part of their USAID Equitable AI Challenge grant.



Shachee Doshi, Senior Advisor, USAID Technology Division, and Meredith Perry, Innovation Advisor, USAID Innovation Division met with representatives from the State Ministry of Education in Guanajuato, Mexico to discuss their AI-based early alert system and opportunities to integrate responsible AI practices to ensure gender-equitable outcomes.

USAID launched its Equitable AI Challenge and Community of Practice to address gender bias and harm resulting from the inequitable design and use of AI tools.

[Learn more about the challenge here.](#)

For more GeoTech Center research and events, please visit our [website](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Explore the GeoTech Center



Atlantic Council

[Privacy Policy](#)

© 2023 Atlantic Council. All rights reserved.

1030 15th Street NW, Washington, DC 20005

[Manage my email preferences.](#)

[Unsubscribe from all Atlantic Council emails.](#)

Email not displaying correctly? [View online.](#)