the

Inclusion Hub

EVENT READBACK

In-person Session 4
Community of Practice: ID
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
6th March 2024

**Unpacking the gender inclusion tool:
Gathering insights from COP members**

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About the Event

As part of the Community of Practice: ID Initiative (COP), a **fourth in-person event** invited various community—based entities and researchers from Ethiopia to participate around the topics of digital ID and gender inclusion. Organisations and entities who were unable to participate in person, were requested to join virtually.

The 4th session of the COP was hosted in-person in Ethiopia on the **6th of March 2024.**

Ethiopia:
12:00 PM — 1:30 PM

The readback of the session will be made available for viewing on:
https://inclusion.aapti.in/

For queries and collaboration opportunities, please email **kunal@aapti.in**

Attendees for the 4th COP event

Attendees from the Initial Steering Committee (ISC):

Members of ISC facilitate the COP

- Ms. Srijoni Sen (MOSIP)
- Ms. Swarathmika Kumar (MOSIP)
- Mr. Rohit Rai (MOSIP)
- Dr. Sarayu Natarajan (Aapti)
- Mr. Kunal Raj Barua (Aapti)
- Ms. Mousmi Panda (Aapti)
- Mr. Shiv Chhatrala (Aapti)

Participants for the Fourth Session of the COP: ID

- Ms. Feven Bulbula (National ID Program — NIDP)
- Mr. Henok Tamrat (Digital Opportunity Trust — DOT)
- Ms. Nessri (Ethiopian Women Empowerment Association — EWEA)
- Mr. Akalu Yosef (Consortium of Self-help group Approach Promoters — COSAP)
- Mr. Abenazzer B. Tadesse (Shega Media)
- Ms. Aynalem (Save Generation)
- Nigest Haile (Center for Accelerated Women's Economic Empowerment — CAWEE)

We thank all the participants for joining the in-person COP event. For the interested entities that were unable to attend, your presence was truly missed, and we hope that you can join us for future virtual meetings. We hope that this note concisely encapsulates the fourth meet.
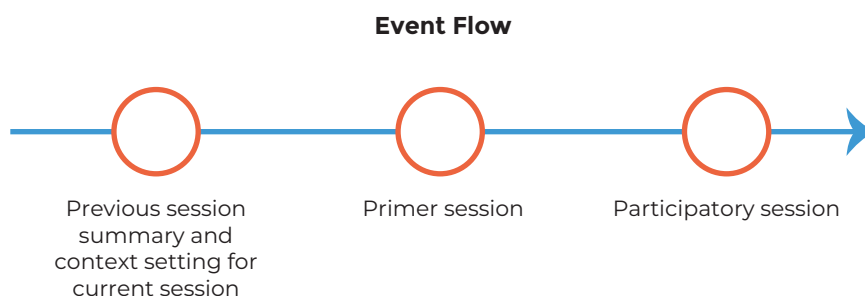
Executive Summary

The fourth event of the Community of Practice (COP) centred on the unpacking of gender inclusion ID tool. It began with a primer session, led by the Aapti team, where the team displayed the **gender inclusion ID tool**, and explained the nuances through the Awareness, Access and Usage (A2U) framework along with observed best practices. The team then discussed the purpose of the tool and its target audience and how this self-assessment tool can be used to inform digital ID developers and deployers.

Upon closure of the research study, this tool will be present for public utility on the inclusion.aapti.in website. Furthermore, this tool will be presented to key authorities and developers, looking to develop digital ID systems, as a self-assessment and guide to help identify the areas where gender inclusivity might be overlooked. The tool also consolidates global practices that could potentially enable women's interactions with digital ID systems.

The event also had a participatory session, which was aimed to gain insights from the participants to validate the nuanced challenges and practices incorporated within the tool. This tool will continue to be evolved through the COP initiative, and requests feedback from interested entities.

Event Agenda

The fourth COP started with the summarisation of the previous virtual COP sessions (the readbacks for which can be found here). It was followed by a primer session, where the gender inclusion ID tool developed by the Aapti research team was unveiled. The event closed with an engaging participatory session with the COP participants.

Event Flow

Previous session summary and context setting for current session · Primer session · Participatory session

The purpose of this readback

This event readback encapsulates the insights, learnings and discussions from the fourth COP event. It covers the key takeaways from the first in-person COP session where the Gender Inclusion ID tool was unveiled in the presence of COP members, ISC members, and other ecosystem actors like CSOs/NGOs/CBEs functioning in Ethiopia. This readback helps to consolidate and summarise the insights shared by participants that were useful for validating the tool and larger ecosystem.

Context of COP 4

Women and other marginalised communities face various challenges when engaging with digital ID systems. When developing and deploying such systems, adopting a human—at—the—center approach is crucial to ensure more robust systems.

The complexity of the digital ID journey could be understood through the presence of several challenges and the diverse roles of actors in the ID system. Therefore, it is crucial to understand this value chain from both the user and system perspectives to ensure inclusivity. The Gender Inclusion ID tool aids in untangling this complexity for the ID developers worldwide by providing a comprehensive understanding of the existing challenges that women face, along with potential practices to address these areas of concern.

It is important to shed light on this tool by sharing it with the diverse ecosystem and incorporating perspectives which would help to evolve the tool, validate its methodology and insights, and add further nuances from other intersections. In this context, the COP hopes to continue convening key actors, such as researchers, community-based entities, and other relevant stakeholders, to strengthen the evidence-based research and actionable recommendations that are needed for the ecosystem. The fourth event of the COP initiative aimed to unpack the inclusion tool that has been designed to provide the self-assessment to ID developers and deployers on ways to make their digital ID system more inclusive.
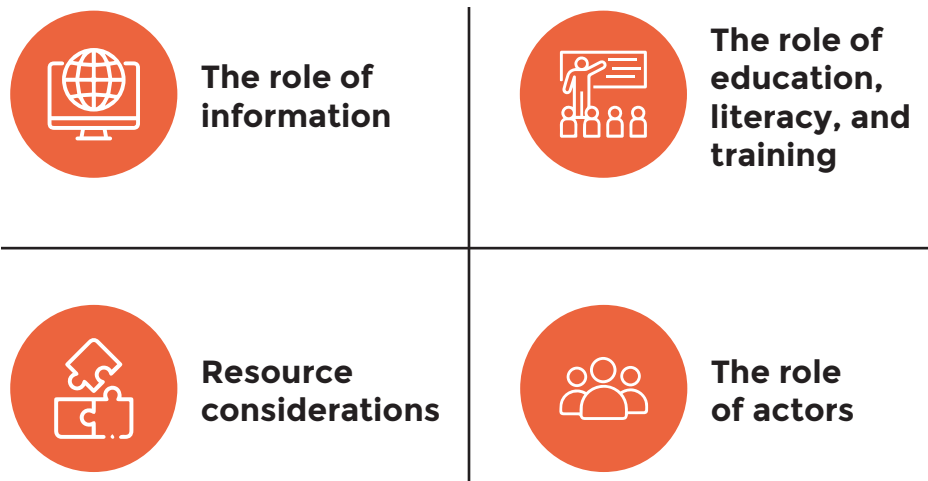
Primer Session

During this session, the gender inclusion ID tool was unveiled by the ISC, which covered various factors within the Awareness, Access, and Usage (A2U) framework. The team elaborated on these findings, discussed relevant questions, and further explored the different categories and subcategories within each level of A2U. The tool was presented as a self—assessment checklist that identified areas of concern and mapped global practices to help guide developers of digital ID systems when building gender inclusive systems.

The team emphasised the importance of focusing on areas where women's agency is typically affected and identifying pathways that help empower women. To this end, the following categories were highlighted in each pillar:
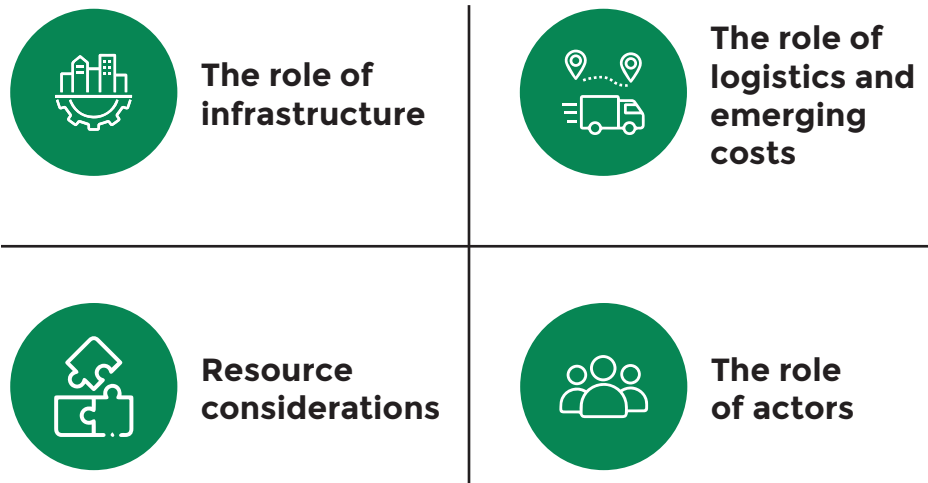
Awareness

Women face several constraints at the level of awareness which eventually affects their access to IDs. To classify barriers at the level of awareness, the research team highlighted the following categories:
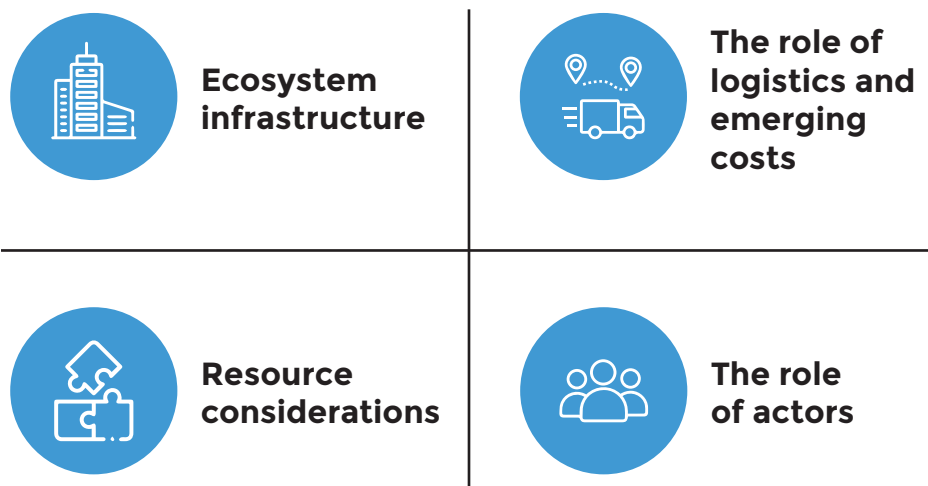
The role of information	The role of education, literacy, and training
Resource considerations	The role of actors

Access

Challenges in access could be classified into following categories:

The role of infrastructure	The role of logistics and emerging costs
Resource considerations	The role of actors

Usage

To consolidate the challenges faced by women in using digital ID, the following categories were created:

Ecosystem infrastructure	The role of logistics and emerging costs
Resource considerations	The role of actors

Drawing from the A2U framework, the tool features these categories to present the nuances of women's interaction with digital ID systems. A further detailing of this tool will be presented during a launch event, where further inputs will be requested to evolve the tool.

For this event, the ISC presented conducted a brief walk-through of pilot version of this tool, while sharing the strategies for embedding this research with key

ecosystem actors. The participatory session requested inputs on this tool in addition to insights that members raised in regard to the subject matter.

The tool is structured as followed:

Pillar	The tool starts at the pillar level to identify areas within awareness, access, and usage of digital IDs
Category	Depending on the pillar selected, the categories (highlighted above) guide users towards specific areas of concern
Sub-category	Depending on the category selected, sub-categories guide the user towards specific examples of existing observations or challenges
Questions	Depending on the option selected, users are guided towards the self-assessment question that can help identify areas of concern for an ID deployer
Implications	Depending on the answer selected, users are directed towards the potential implications that might emerge if this challenge exists within the context of this system
Observed practices	Users are navigated to the global practice observed that has addressed this challenge in some capacity

By answering the questions within this tool, digital ID developers can inform themselves of the potential areas where friction or possible areas of concern could lie within their system. These areas could have various implications on the users (in this case residents or citizens) of the system. We hope that the practices documented in this cool can help provide developers a starting point to strengthen gender inclusive thinking and design within their systems.

Participatory Session

During the participatory session, COP members built on the findings represented in the tool and shared their insights on the on—ground challenges faced by women and other underserved communities due to the absence of identity credentials, identity documents and digital IDs, and hurdles faced by women when obtaining different forms of ID.

Challenges highlighted at the level of awareness:

○ **Ms. Nessri (EWEA),** highlighted that women often lack digital literacy in Ethiopia due to which they remain unaware and unable to use digital systems.

○ **Mr. Abenazzer (Shega)** highlighted the challenge of accessing information and digital finances. He further shared the need to reach both urban and rural communities in Ethiopia through different channels. While radio channels could be leveraged in rural areas, some urban areas show signs of digital media usage. Additionally, he emphasised building and nurturing partnerships with local entities to effectively disseminate information in remote and far-flung areas.

Logistical barriers in accessing digital ID:

○ **Mr. Henok Tamrat (DOT),** talked about how accessing ID is an issue for people from different parts of the country, as they often need to travel back to their birthplace to get an ID. This impacts women more, as societal norms necessitate migration upon marriage.

Enabling women's agency and decision making:

○ Women's agency and decision making are often impacted due to socio-normative constraints and lack of financial empowerment. **Ms. Nessri** emphasised conducting more research on exploring different ways to conduct community engagement.

The role of community based entities and self-help groups

CBE's play a key role in facilitating access to services and opportunities, and while alternative mechanisms have been deployed in its absence, representatives from such organisations believe that women continue to face challenges when accessing and using their IDs.

○ **Mr. Henok** and the work done by DOT, provides training to women on digital literacy, and connects them with Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) to enable their access to short term credit. While stating that enabling women's participation in their economies, training and entrepreneurship are key facilitators. He also shared that such opportunities might be easier to access if women were able to obtain identity credentials.

○ EWEA's work and need for women's access to services was discussed by **Ms. Nessri**. They assist women with the resources and logistical support needed to obtain IDs. For example, they offer financial assistance when opening bank accounts. Additionally, these organisations aid women in navigating the logistical process of obtaining their IDs, including helping them reach national administration offices and ensuring their photo and other credentials are for the ID application.

○ **Mr. Akalu (COSAP)** emphasised the role of self-help groups (SHGs) as a pathway to strengthen women's participation and literacy. COSAP identifies individuals with similar economic backgrounds to form SHGs and provides them training on various financial aspects. These groups are then utilised to facilitate access to credit from various sources. However, challenges arise when these groups are not officially recognized, hindering their ability to negotiate with financial institutions such as banks to register women and open accounts.

○ Representatives from **Save Generation** and **CAWEE** discussed the potential use cases for an Ethiopian digital ID — Fayda ID. They emphasised the importance of Fayda being utilised for banking services, particularly for primary banking, and the necessity of complying with Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements.

The participatory session saw the various ways in which COP members interact with end users of such systems, and highlighted the various constraints and challenges that people face, and the challenges that such organisations face when facilitating such services. Insights from this session were incorporated into the tool strategically and hope to inform key ecosystem actors of existing concerns.

Conclusion

With the closure of the fourth session, the ISC urged the COP members, the participants at the COP Connect event, and other interested entities to continue engaging with ecosystem actors. The tool presented during this session will now be codified into a website and disseminated with digital ID developers and deployers. While the tool focuses on strengthening a system based approach with a focus on the non-technical layers of digital IDs, the ISC hopes to continue building evidence that can drive more gender inclusive thinking and design within digital systems.

With countries adopting digital public infrastructure and other critical systems to catalyse service provision, the inclusion of underserved population groups should continue to be prioritised. Digital IDs form a foundational layer when building digital ecosystems and are a key lever when working towards SDG 16.9.

As part of this initiative, the COP 5 event will take place virtually in the month of July, and request members as well as interested entities to participate in these sessions in varying capacities.

Next Steps

The COP Session 5 will be held in the month of July 2024 and would like to welcome participants to get in touch with the ISC at kunal@aapti.in. The ISC invites participants to present their work during the session, pertaining to thematic areas of the COP. Please refer to the concept document to help frame the presentation.

Feedback on the awareness, access, and usage framework and the gender inclusion tool

Based on the framework presented during the session, the ISC will continuously consolidate key challenges and global practices that address the challenges when women interact with digital ID systems. The ISC would kindly request any interested entities to share suggestions and feedback with kunal@aapti.in. Please refer to the framework here when sharing these inputs.

Connect the ISC with relevant entities and organisations

As part of this initiative, the ISC strives to bring more relevant voices and learnings to the forum. We kindly request if participants could extend the COP invitation to other entities (researchers, non-profits, community-based entities, etc.) working in the thematic areas pertaining to the COP. In case you are unable to connect us, the ISC would also appreciate receiving the names of such entities to establish communication. The introductions could be done over email through kunal@aapti.in.

Relevant resources for the microsite

The ISC will be publishing this event readback, along with other resources (recordings, existing research, etc.) emerging from these convenings on the dedicated microsite.

**For more information, visit
https://inclusion.aapti.in**