

APWLD Media Fellowship on Digitalisation and Feminist Digital Rights and Justice

Application Period: 30 November—31 January 2025

The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) invites **women media professionals, journalists, data and visual journalists** across **Asia and the Pacific** region to participate in the ***APWLD Media Fellowship on Digitalisation and Feminist Digital Rights and Justice***.

The APWLD Media Fellowship was launched in 2018 to respond to the pressing need to spotlight the voices and stories of women from marginalised communities. It aims to increase space and influence of feminist narratives and demands in diverse media platforms to advance women's human rights, feminist digital rights and Development Justice

To date, it has engaged 30 media fellows, producing over 74 multimedia reports that tackle grassroots women's issues, analyse structural inequalities and promote feminist collective action and solidarity through a feminist and human rights lens.

This year's media fellowship aims to deepen the media, data and visual reportage on the rise of digitalisation in the region and its gendered impact on women and their communities.

Now in its sixth year, APWLD Media Fellowship aims to continue creating inclusive and safe spaces for journalists in traditional and new media platforms and showcase feminist storytelling that highlights the voices of grassroots women and their communities in the region.

Interested applicants may apply for **individual fellowship** or **team fellowship**. Selected individuals will be given a stipend of USD 3,000 while teams will be provided with USD 5,000 to cover expenses for research and travel (conditions permitting) according to workplans co-developed with APWLD.

The duration of the fellowship will be from **May 2025 to May 2026**. During this period, the fellows will have an option to produce news, feature, photo, data and/or podcast/audio stories, audio-video content/documentary and/or combination of these formats with a feminist lens that highlight the gendered impact of digitalisation on women's human rights.

APWLD's Media Fellowship is coordinated and conducted by the APWLD Information and Communications 'Feminist Voice' Programme. In previous years, the APWLD Media Fellowship focused on the issues of development, climate change crisis, gendered impact of COVID-19 on the ground, women migrants and migration, and militarism.

APWLD, a regional feminist, membership-driven network with over 313 members from 31 countries and territories across Asia and the Pacific, is committed to building feminist movements to advance women's human rights and [Development Justice](#). If you are passionate about covering feminist, progressive movements and challenging structural globalised inequalities, please consider applying to this opportunity.

Objectives of this fellowship

- To produce stories that highlight feminist analysis and demands on digitalisation, digital rights and justice issues and their gendered impact on women and their communities in mainstream and alternative media platforms.
- To influence and shape the public discourse on digitalisation and encourage reporting from feminist perspectives, in the process influencing policies and conversations in advocacy spaces.
- To support APWLD members' and partners' campaigns and advocacy at national and regional levels and their media advocacy work.

Why Digitalisation and Feminist Digital Rights and Justice?

Digitalisation is often defined as application of digital tools, technologies, strategies and business models to particular sectors and across socio-economic systems. However, the rise of phenomena related to digitalisation such as digital capitalism, information and data colonialism, techno-patriarchy, surveillance capitalism and the fourth industrial revolution¹ shows that digitalisation goes beyond its seemingly basic, objective and apolitical definition. Truth is, digitalisation is complex, subjective and political, especially when viewed from the perspective of those who bear the brunt of digitalisation's social, political, economic and environmental costs.

While many pose that digitalisation as the fourth industrial revolution, the manner in which the international community labels this era excludes the situation and experience of the Global South that has yet to experience the slightest digital advancement the Global North has been experiencing for the many decades.

For one, [46 percent of women in the Asia and the Pacific region still do not have access to the Internet](#), showing that access to the benefits of technological innovations has remained unequal across the region and the world; while risking further marginalisation due to the shift to digital public service provision for instance.

¹ Fourth Industrial Revolution is the trend towards automation and data exchange in manufacturing technologies and processes which include cyber-physical systems (CPS), Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing, cognitive computing, and artificial intelligence.

Digitalisation and digital developments, often accompanied by the promise of economic growth and job opportunities, impact women workers' security, skills and work conditions. According to a forecast from McKinsey, a global strategy and management consulting firm, between 40 million and 160 million women globally might need to transition to other roles by 2030, mostly higher-skill ones, because of digitalisation. For women workers to adapt to these changes, they need to be skilled, mobile and tech-savvy. However, in the current situation where women workers in the region are highly concentrated in lower- and middle-skill jobs with low pay and poor working conditions, women will possibly be at a greater risk of unemployment and displacement.

Some emerging issues that affect women workers in the context of digitalisation are datafication, platformisation, AI and robotics. It has grave, direct impacts on large-scale unemployment and underemployment among the low-income class, mostly women who work in the skilled and semi-skilled job markets.

Women continue to experience various forms of structural disadvantages in digital spaces. Big tech companies eschew transparency and accountability in favour of privatisation and protection of trade secrets which include algorithms that amplify hate speech along with online gender-based violence.

To further illustrate the growing economic injustice as digitalisation expands unprecedentedly, it is important to look at who owns and controls digital technologies. In April 2024, [Forbes](#) revealed that tech owners dominate the Forbes' World's Billionaires List, with seven out of 10 wealthiest people in the world from the tech industry. They are the owners of Amazon, Google, Microsoft, X (formerly Twitter), Meta and Oracle.

In this context the discourse on digital rights and digital justice is situated. Digital rights are largely framed as human rights and legal rights that allow individuals to access, use, and create digital technologies and tools, while digital justice is framed as mere rectification of data-driven harms already inflicted on individuals or groups. While both concepts present lofty ideals that need to be protected and promoted, the prevailing discourses in most digital rights spaces remain narrow and lacking of gender perspective, focusing only on internet access and information technology while leaving out the important contexts of socio-economic, political, structural and gender-specific barriers that prevent the Global South, the marginalised groups, including women from exercising their digital rights and fundamental freedoms.

This fellowship aims to highlight and deepen conversation on feminist digital rights and justice and unpack how digitalisation impacts women's lives, safety, work and livelihoods in the region. It intends to scrutinise how digitalisation has been commodified at the expense of women's human rights. Likewise it hopes to examine the environmental costs of digitalisation and expose the rise of authoritarianism in the digital era.

Major themes and an indicative (but not exhaustive) set of issues that stories under the fellowship can cover include, but are not restricted to:

Digitalisation and its impact on women's work and livelihoods

- Women representation and working conditions in the tech industry
- Impact of AI, automation and digitalisation on women workers, agricultural workers including peasants and fisherfolk
- Rise of platform economy

Data privacy, digital surveillance and militarism/wars

- State/government surveillance and militarism/wars
- Data privacy rights violations
- Digital corporate capture and data governance

Misinformation and disinformation

- Governments as peddler of fake news
- Fake news in the context of shaping public opinions and results of elections
- Targeting mass leaders, unionists and activists

Rise of digital authoritarianism

- Censorship and internet freedom
- Cyberattacks and internet shutdowns
- Corporate authoritarianism through digital trade and economy

Autonomy and bodily integrity

- Rise of online/tech-facilitated gender-based violence especially against women and women human rights defenders

Environment, Agriculture and Economy

- Environmental costs of digitalisation
- Food sovereignty and agroecology in the digital era
- Digital economy governance for data and AI
- Impact of e-commerce, digital trade and finance on women
- Tech-based access to basic social services (education, health, etc)

How does the fellowship work?

Selected fellows will be invited to attend a four-day in-person **Media Fellowship Training** on 25-28 April 2025 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. At the training, the fellows will learn about the APWLD feminist analysis using the Patriarchy, Globalisation, Fundamentalisms and Militarism (PGFM) framework, Theory of Change, Development Justice, Feminist Reporting and the different pressing women's human rights issues related to digitalisation and feminist digital rights and justice. Fellows are also expected to present their story plans and finalise them based on APWLD's collective feedback during the training.

During the fellowship, the fellows may also have the opportunity to be invited to other online or physical civil society and UN advocacy events and meetings on digitalisation and digital rights and justice. At the end of the fellowship, the fellows are required to submit a narrative and financial report documenting their experience and will be invited to a two- to three-day reflection meeting in April 2026.

Reporting and Publishing

For Individual fellowship

Individual fellows are expected to produce either

- **one multi-part series** of at least 3,500 words in total, or
- **three written stories** of at least 1,000 words each.

Out of the three stories,

- one story should be **investigative or in-depth**; and
- at least one story should focus specifically on **APWLD members or partners** working on digital rights and justice and on or the impacts of digitalisation on women and their communities within their country/sub-region.

Alternatively, for visual/audio-visual mediums, individual fellows are expected to produce either

- **one full video documentary** with at least 15-minute running time,
- **three stories** of at least five minutes each for video or 20 minutes for audio, or
- **three photo stories** of a minimum of eight (8) and maximum of 12 curated photos each with at least 500-word essay/story

Out of the three stories,

- one story should be **investigative or in-depth**; and

- at least one story should focus specifically on **APWLD members or partners** working on digital rights and justice and on or the impacts of digitalisation on women and their communities within their country/sub-region.

For Team fellowship

Team fellows are expected to produce either

- **One multi-part series** of at least 3,500 words with at least **10 curated photos/a 5-minute video** to complement each part, or
- **Three written stories** of at least 1,000 words each with at least **10 curated photos/a 5-minute video** to complement each story.

Out of the three stories,

- one story should be **investigative or in-depth**;
- at least one story should focus specifically on **APWLD members or partners** working on digital rights and justice and on or the impacts of digitalisation on women and their communities within their country/sub-region.

Alternatively, for audio-visual mediums, team fellows are expected to produce either

- **one full video documentary** with at least 20-minute running time and **three photo stories** of at least 10 curated photos with at least 300 word text description/caption for each story,
- **three stories** of at least five minutes each for video or 20 minutes for audio and **three photo stories** of at least 10 curated photos with at least 300 word text description/caption for each story

Out of the three stories,

- one story should be **investigative or in-depth**;
- at least one story should focus specifically on **APWLD members or partners** working on digital rights and justice and on or the impacts of digitalisation on women and their communities within their country/sub-region.

Media fellows may produce long features, advocacy-focused, data-driven or documentary style stories. They can also publish stories in their own languages, however, they are expected to submit an English version of their drafts for feedback, and provide an English translation of their published stories.

Expectations from the Fellows

Other than producing and publishing stories under the fellowship, the fellows are expected to:

- Attend the Media Fellowship Training (April 2025);
- Attend and engage in civil society and UN advocacy spaces and meetings when necessary, as guided by APWLD;
- Ensure publication of their stories in their media outlets or in other media outlets;
- Ensure that publishing outlets will indicate/reflect that the published stories are a part of APWLD Media and Visual Journalism Fellowship programme;
- Be in close, regular communications with APWLD Information and Communications Programme throughout the fellowship;
- Submit the full version of the published stories with publication links, photographs and accompanying captions. Files should be in jpeg format, at least 4000 pixel-wide resolution, saved at highest compression format with file name format: name-keyword-sequence number (e.g. GManuel-gigworker-AI-1); and
- Submit the full narrative and financial report after publishing all the required stories

APWLD Roles and Responsibilities

- During the fellowship, APWLD will provide a stipend of 3,000 USD to individual fellows and 5,000 USD to team fellows to cover expenses for research and travel, according to story plans co-developed with and approved by APWLD.
- APWLD will provide continuous support to the fellows in shaping their stories and analysis and providing feedback on all stories before publishing.
- APWLD will feature and promote the fellows' stories on its social media, website and other APWLD publications where fit.
- APWLD has the right to use both the stories and photos on our digital platforms (website and social media), our publications and other printed materials, exhibitions and other advocacy spaces where we see fit, either in excerpt or in complete form.

Selection

Selection Criteria

- The fellowship is open to women media professionals, journalists, and visual journalists from Asia and the Pacific with at least three years of experience.
- Experience in covering women's human rights, grassroots movements, and development issues particularly in the context of digitalisation, digital rights and justice
- Seven (7) applicants will be selected for this media and visual journalism fellowship. Both individual and team applications are accepted. In case of a team, application should be made in the name of both co-applicants. **Four** (4) individual and **three** (3) group applicants will be selected
- Commitment to feminist movement building.
- Must be able to travel overseas as required.
- Proficient in English and a language from the Asia or the Pacific region.

Application

The applicant should submit an expression of interest with the following documents:

1. [Completed application form](#) (including copy of valid travel document)
2. Curriculum Vitae
3. Two work samples of any medium in English or with English translations
4. Proposed work plan (use [APWLD template](#))
5. Proposed budget plan (use [APWLD template](#))
6. A letter of endorsement from media organisation if full-time employee, or a letter of endorsement from an editor if a freelance journalist/visual journalist
7. Letter from editor to guarantee publication of news stories indicating that the stories will be published as part of the Media Fellowship; Optional for freelance journalists

Timeline

November 30 - January 31 - Application Period

January to February 2025 - Selection Process

March 2025 - Announcement of Media Fellows

May 2025 - (in-person) Media Fellowship Training

May 2026 - (in-person) Reflection Meeting

Please send completed forms and other required documents via email with the subject line “**Application: APWLD Media Fellowship**” to Edz dela Cruz at edz@apwld.org and cc Liani MK at liani@apwld.org and Gerimara Manuel at gerimara@apwld.org, by no later than 31 January 2025, 11:59 pm Bangkok time.

Please note that incomplete applications will not be considered and only short-listed candidates will be notified.