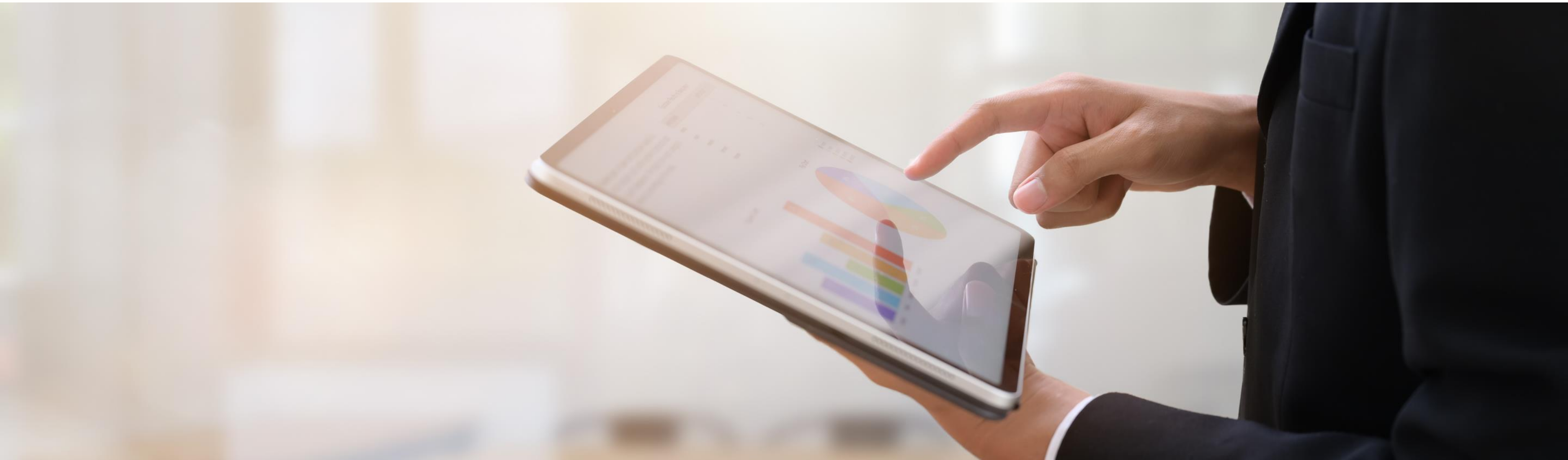# Digital Skill Development in ECA
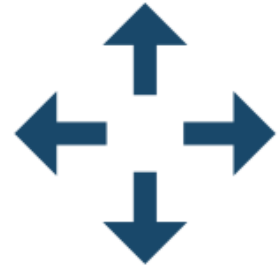
March 16, 2021

""“To steer actions towards transformational change, it is important to empower people in three ways: by enhancing equity, by pursuing innovation and by instilling a sense of stewardship of nature." UNDP HDR 2020

Insights from COVID-19 response

The severity of the Digital Divide has been exposed

Digital transformation can make inequality worse if not intentionally inclusive

Risks of digitalization such as misinformation, privacy and violence require more global attention

Governments which already invested in digital responded more effectively

750M people live in unserviced areas; 3.3B people live in coverage areas but do not use the internet[1] because of lack of affordability and digital skills

Rural populations in low and middle-income countries are 40% less likely to use the internet than their urban peers[1]

False news is 70% more likely to be retweeted than truth on Twitter[2]

Early implementers reached twice as many citizens through their social protection programs vs. late starters (39% coverage vs 19%)[3]

1. GSMA ,2019   2. MIT, 2018   3. World Bank, 2020

Source: WEF, Future of Jobs Report 2020
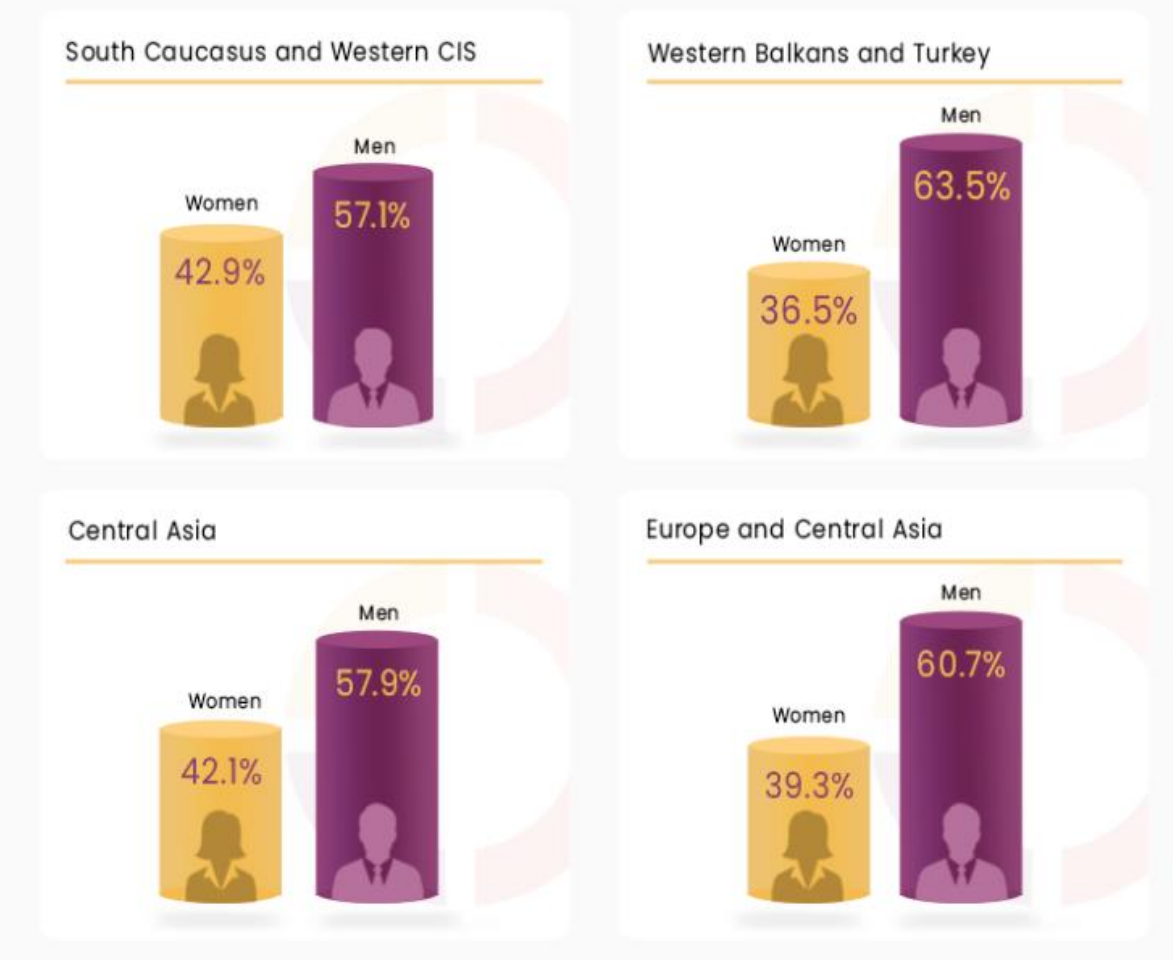
Digital Skills and Access

- Majority of countries have enacted working & studying remotely, requiring fast adaptation to digital tools.
  - 84% of employers are set to rapidly digitalize working processes, including a significant expansion of remote work—with the potential to move 44% of their workforce to operate remotely. (WEF, 2020).

- Existing inequalities have been exacerbated due to the pandemic.
  - Automation, in tandem with the COVID-19 recession, is **creating a 'double-disruption' scenario for workers. (WEF, 2020)**
  - There is a difference in opportunities, tools and mechanisms available within and between countries.
  - Women participate less in the labor market, are less represented in STEM fields and in least developed countries., the gender divide in access to internet is 39%..
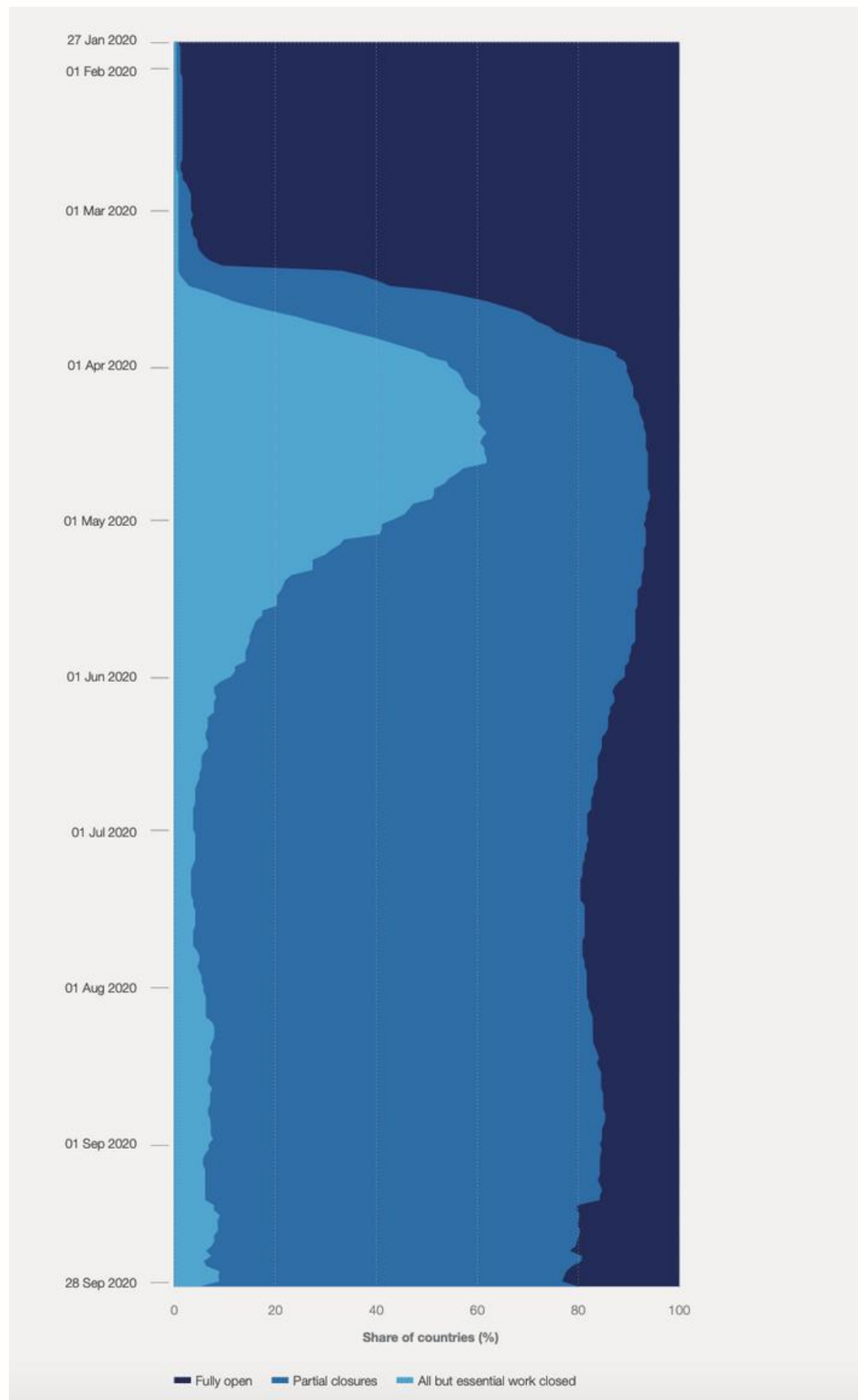
Women and Digital Skills

- The International Monetary Fund has found that 180 million predominantly "female" jobs have a 70 percent or higher probability of automation; which will require new skills in work and working arrangements.

- Due to the socialist past in ECA, women are well represented (above EU average) in tertiary education, women are under-represented in the STEM job market.

Share of women and men in research in natural sciences, engineering and technology, medical and health sciences, agriculture, and veterinary sciences

South Caucasus and Western CIS
Women 42.9%
Men 57.1%

Western Balkans and Turkey
Women 36.5%
Men 63.5%

Central Asia
Women 42.1%
Men 57.9%

Europe and Central Asia
Women 39.3%
Men 60.7%

Source: Human Resources in R&D UIS Statistics. Latest data available is no older than 2014; *Data accessed on December 29, 2020.*

Meeting Needs

In the short term, we are supporting skill development to better match demands in the market, as well as enable digital skill development for the government & vulnerable groups:

In Serbia, the IT retraining programs have encompassed at least 250 hours of training in a specific programming language, of over 1300 trainees. The employment rate was 34.7% more than 12 months after the program ended, with no gender difference.

In Armenia a web platform is promoting and facilitating job opportunities. Incubation support (mentorship and financial) was given to startup ideas, and UNDP/Kolba Lab's newly launched "Kolba Jobs" is providing online skill-building opportunities for alternative jobs.

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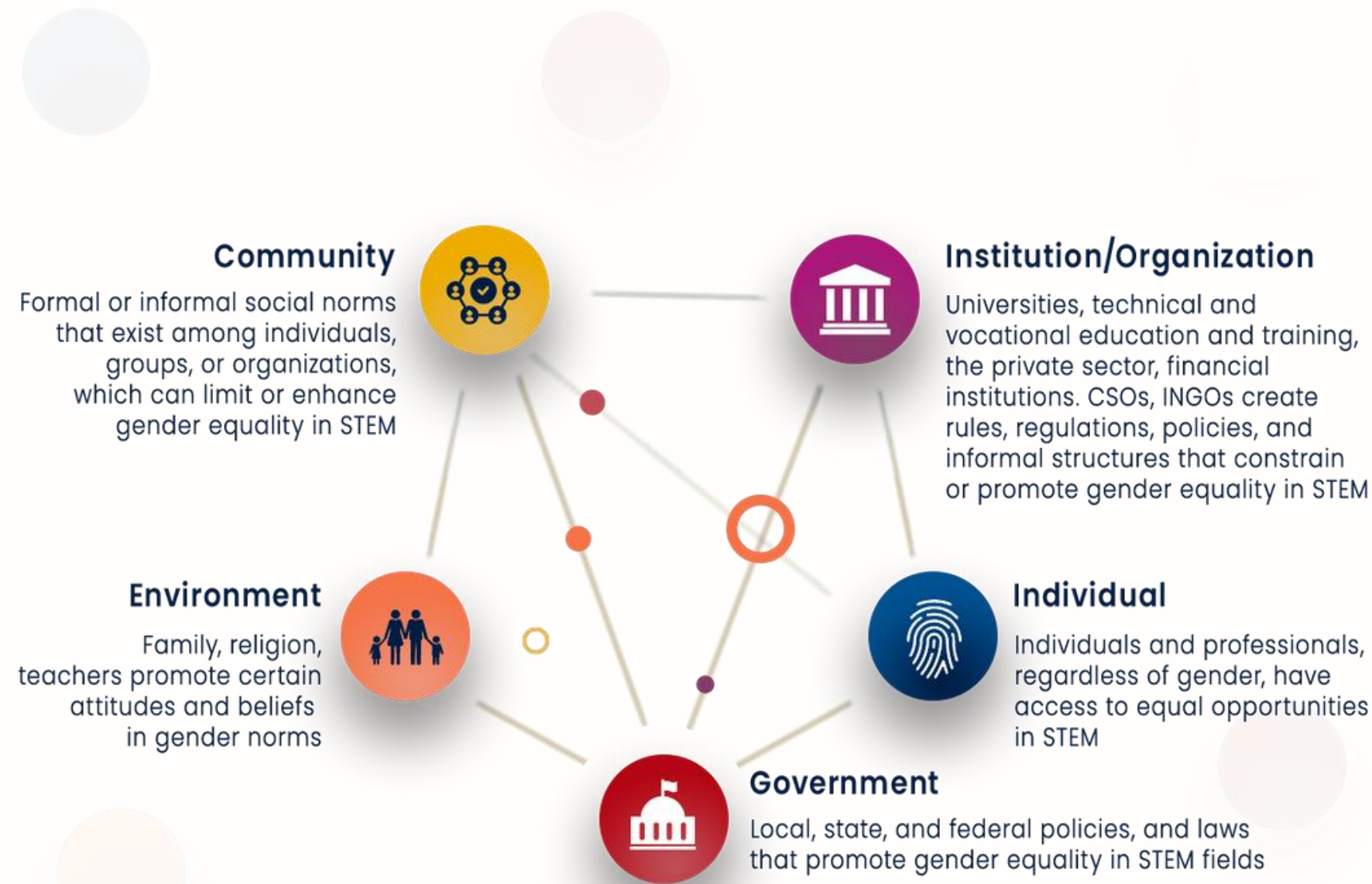
In Kazakhstan, UNDP provided business continuity for the government during the pandemic by supporting telecommuting arrangements.

The pandemic accelerated digitalization of public services and highlighted the limited digital literacy in Kazakhstan. UNDP arranged for 450 volunteers to increase digital literacy of users of public services and decrease the workload of one-stop shops during the next 6 months.

In Turkey, the programme to support refugees, tested and rolled out a hybrid model of online and offline learning.

In N. Macedonia, we are developing a multi-stakeholder skills development platform to support the digital transformation of construction, energy, agriculture and textile industry.

Medium-term: Ecosystem Support

Community
Formal or informal social norms that exist among individuals, groups, or organizations, which can limit or enhance gender equality in STEM

Institution/Organization
Universities, technical and vocational education and training, the private sector, financial institutions. CSOs, INGOs create rules, regulations, policies, and informal structures that constrain or promote gender equality in STEM

Environment
Family, religion, teachers promote certain attitudes and beliefs in gender norms

Individual
Individuals and professionals, regardless of gender, have access to equal opportunities in STEM

Government
Local, state, and federal policies, and laws that promote gender equality in STEM fields

Through a diversity of platforms, UNDP is supporting diverse actors to enhance their digital capabilities and challenge existing norms and value-systems:
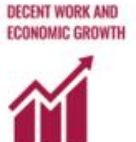
The STEM4ALL platform uses knowledge and advocacy to advance gender equality in the workplace in the men-dominated growth industry sectors of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) across Europe and Central Asia.

An enabling ecosystem strengthened through coordinated, diverse networks can help build more inclusive, innovative and productive businesses in key STEM sectors.

Medium-term: Ecosystem Support

EIF – UNDP The Inclusive and Digital Growth Facility
## Capped Portfolio Guarantee to support digital enablers of Inclusive Growth

|			
Relevant SDGs	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Potential Final Beneficiaries	MSME (start-ups and existing) located or with significant operations in the Western Balkans		
	Eligible Digital Purposes		**Eligible Digital Expenditures**
Potential (Thematic) Eligibility Criteria	Internal processes ● Supply chain management ● Product/service innovations ● Customer relationships ● Business development ● Innovative business models ● Security ● Digitals skills and training		Hardware ● Other digital equipment ● Software packages, licenses or intellectual property rights ● Third party service providers ● Training in the use of digital technologies
Guarantee Rate	50% [TBC]		

Key Principles

Inclusion & Equity

Focus on **inclusive connectivity**, n **& digital literacy** that are human-centered and can lead to transformative outcomes.
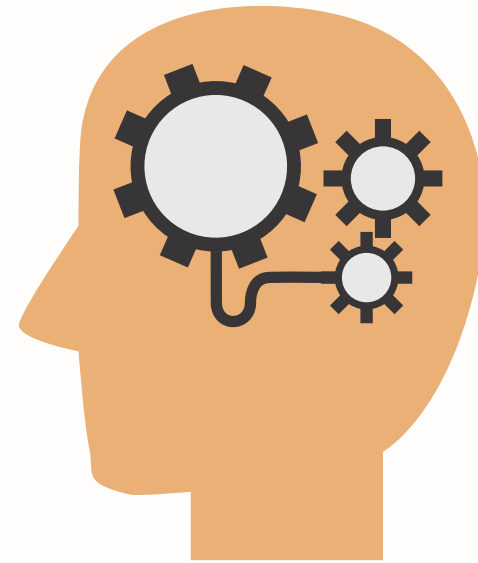
Innovation

Provide support to governments for 'whole of society' digital transformation & continuous experimentation on leveraging cutting edge technologies.
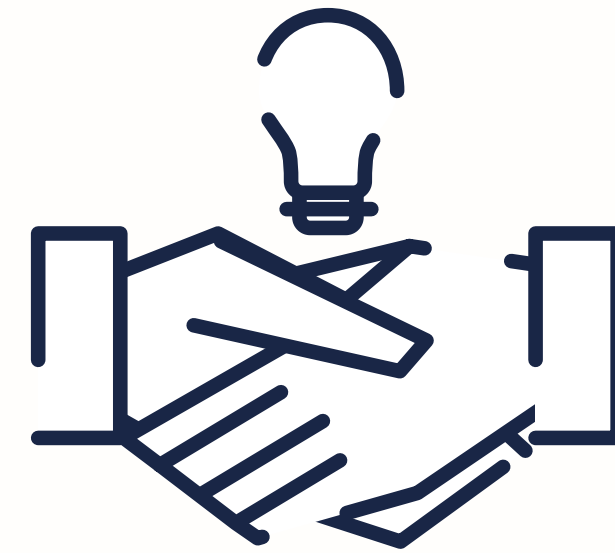
Partnerships

Grow partnerships between the public sector, private sector, non-governmental organizations and international organizations to create more equitable access and distribution of opportunities.

Thank You.

Agi Veres
agi.veres@undp.org
@agiveres