

G7 AND G20 DIGITAL GENDER GAP ENGAGEMENT

DIGITAL GENDER GAP STUDY

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SPF AND THE DIGITAL GENDER GAP STUDY

- The Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF) is a Japanese private foundation established in 1986 with a mission to enhance international cooperation.
- SPF has set its focus on five key areas, which include women empowerment. Its Gender Investment and Innovation Program focuses on promoting economic empowerment of women through entrepreneurship, gender lens investing and efforts to close gender gaps at all levels.
- Gender Investment and Innovation Program commissioned the Digital Gender Gap Study with Ms. Lauren Power* as Lead Researcher of the Digital Gender Gap Study in 2023.10 to 2024.3, with a view to accelerating the achievement of commitments made by G20 Leaders in its Leaders' Declaration 2023 on halving the digital gender gap by 2030.
- The Digital Gender Gap Study has three primary aims: I.) to evaluate G7 and G20 engagement of the digital gender gap, 2.) to understand how gender-equality oriented KPI frameworks can support positive change to close digital gender gaps, and 3.) to present information to support the design of SPF pilot projects for closing the digital gender. This presentation represents the first aim: to evaluate G7 and G20 engagement of the digital gender gap.
- SPF thanks the Committee of Experts for the Digital Gender Gap Study for contributing their knowledge and insights, including Yolanda Botti-Lodovico, Caitlin Kraft-Buchman, Barbora Černušáková, Tamara Dancheva, Vilas Dhar, Gina Helfrich, Megumi Ishimoto, Yuko Itatsu, Kirthi Jayakumar, Purushottam Kaushik, Miki Kuribayashi, Bernice Lee OBE, Virginia Littlejohn, Ayaka Matsuno, Elena Mayer-Besting, Alexandra Hakansson Schmidt, Tetsushi Sonobe, Jonathan Wong, Steph Wright, Andrew Wyckoff, and Yuka Yabashi.

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WHAT IS THE DIGITAL GENDER GAP?

- The digital economy is a significant part of global GDP at over 15%, expanding 2.5 times quicker than the physical economy in the last decade, reshaping society and everyday life.
- Emerging technologies, including the introduction of AI (e.g., ChatGPT, etc.), amplifies the critical issue of the digital gender divide, which endangers both gender equality and inclusive economic and social development.
- The digital gender divide spans three areas: 1.) unequal access to technologies and the internet, 2.) skill development for digital engagement, and 3.) lack of women in digital leadership roles².
- Failing to address this divide could worsen existing gender disparities, despite the transformative potential of digital advancements.
- A collaborative effort among governments, international bodies, and private sectors is vital to overcome the digital gender divide and ensure equitable digital empowerment.

CHALLENGES INTRODUCED BY THE DIGITAL GENDER GAP

- Digital inclusion presents complex challenges, with **structural issues** like income, education, and job disparities hindering women's participation in the digital world, especially affecting elderly, rural, disabled, and refugee women.
- The 2023 GSMA report indicates **significant gender gaps** in technology ownership and usage, with **17**% and **7**% fewer women owning smartphones and mobile phones respectively, and **19**% less likely to use mobile internet, leaving around **900 million women** unconnected³.
- The gender divide goes beyond access to include digital literacy and contributions to technology creation, with women and girls trailing in STEM education and career paths due to systemic barriers and persistent stereotypes. A key strategy to reduce this disparity is the enhancement of educational programs that integrate STEM with arts and humanities, promoting a diverse and inclusive digital landscape.
- Women are notably underrepresented in the tech sector, with men dominating the field. This imbalance is stark in leadership roles, with only 28% of women holding such positions and a high attrition rate as half leave by age 35⁴.
- To bridge the leadership gap and advance gender equality in the digital realm, initiatives to **inspire and support** women as entrepreneurs, innovators, and business leaders are crucial.

CHALLENGES INTRODUCED BY THE DIGITAL GENDER GAP

- Digital technology is an exceptionally empowering force for women when it is inclusive and regulated for impact.
- Unfortunately, persistent gender gaps in digital access and literacy, STEM education, and biased algorithms based on historic exclusions of women in the data perpetuate outdated gender stereotypes and the exclusion of women in the creation and use of new digital tools, including AI, and the underrepresentation of women in careers in the digital and technology sectors.
- Although this digital gender gap is not new and there are interventions already in place to close this gap, recent accelerations in emerging technologies reignited concerns on digital inequalities. The public launch of the generative artificial intelligence (AI), ChatGPT, on 30 November 2022 sparked global interest and concern about how AI might be leveraged to disrupt or amplify different forms of discrimination and exclusion, including discrimination against women and girls in all their diversity.
- Al will affect almost 40% of jobs around the world, replacing some and complementing others, according to the IMF⁵. It is critical to make sure there is a balance of **inclusive policies** to capture this potential without amplifying existing inequalities.

SELECTED POLICY APPROACHES TO AI GOVERNANCE

- There have been many policy approaches prepared, both by state and non-state actors, and some have been adopted and are already being implemented. A notable example is UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, a global framework of ethical norms and values for digital governance on Al technologies and Al-influenced technologies⁶. Since its launch in 2021, more than 50 countries have begun to integrate its principles into policies, law, and practices, and key private sector actors have also pledged to use it in their design and deployment of Al systems⁷.
- The OECD AI Observatory, International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and many others have also remained leading voices in the evolving digital governance landscape. State-led efforts such as the European Union's EU AI Act, the USA's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025⁸ are also driving regulations on emerging technologies, and these policy advisories and frameworks can be revisited to respond to new challenges over time.

THE ROLE OF THE G7 AND G20 COUNTRIES

- According to a new report by the International Monetary Fund, *Gen-Al: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work*⁹, advanced economies will experience the benefits and pitfalls of Al sooner than emerging and developing economies, largely because they have the necessary digital infrastructure and human capital. This forecast highlights risks brought by emerging technologies, including Al and those influenced by Al, of widening digital gaps between those that are already skilled, and empowered, and those who are not, including women and those from emerging and developing economies.
- As G7 and G20 countries stand on the cusp of significant digital advancements, addressing the digital gender gap promptly can prevent the exacerbation of existing inequalities. G7 countries represent approximately 44% of the global economy¹⁰ and less than 10% of the world's population¹¹, and G20 countries represent 85% of global GDP and two-thirds of the world's population¹². The influence of these countries on the global policies and economic development is significant and far reaching beyond the border of G7 and G20 countries.
- At the high-level global forums of the G7 and G20, as well as myriad forums hosted by international organizations, global feminist civil society leaders in the Women7 (W7) engagement group, Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC), Women20 (W20) engagement group, and G20 EMPOWER have been advocating for closing the digital gender gaps.
- How have their efforts aligned with G7 and G20 leader commitments to close the digital gender gap?

METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

3-Step Literature Review Research Method

- 1. Locate, collect, review, and analyze publications from the Women7 (W7) and the Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC), and Women20 (W20) and G20 EMPOWER official engagement groups on gender equality issues to the G7a and G20b deliberations and summits, respectively, and represent the voice of feminist civil society.
- 2. Locate, collect, review, and analyze publications from the G7 and G20 Ministerial and Leaders' levels and analyze a.) if there was engagement on some aspect of the digital gender gap published under each G7 and G20 Presidency, and b.) which Ministries and publications were addressing this topic.
- 3. Analysis: The presence of engagement or commitment on closing the digital gender gap in G7 or G20 Leaders or Ministerial publications does not necessarily indicate that regulatory actions will be taken. G7 and G20 engagement and commitments on certain issues can, however, be an indication of a measure of political will. By analyzing G7 and G20 engagement and commitments on the digital gender gap, it is possible to compare the political will of feminist civil society, represented by W7 and W20, against the political will of G7 and G20 leaders.

Limitations To The Study

- In the absence of a G7 and G20 secretariat, there is not a fully comprehensive and accurate database for G7 and G20 publications. Locating and collecting as many relevant publications as this Study demands has been a challenge, and it is not possible to know if there are unrecorded or removed documents.
- There is lack of parity between the scale and level of engagement between the G7 and G20 presidencies. In some years, only the W20 Communique was published, while many documents were published in others. Also, some publications are quite short, which limits the number of issues and degree of complexity they can enclose in a single document. Others, however, are much longer and allow for a broader and/or deeper level of engagement on selected issues. Therefore, when measuring the inclusion of aspects of the digital gender gap in W7 and W20 documents, this limitation must be considered.
- It is unclear how much influence, communication, or coordination, or lack thereof, has taken place between W7 and GEAC, and W20 and G20 EMPOWER each year, and/or in subsequent years. The process for choosing and engaging stakeholders and drafting the outcomes documents each year is also unclear. Without this information, it is not possible to know if the process can be considered inclusive or representative of the concerns of all global feminist society.

^b G20 member states (2023) Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.



a G7 member states (2023) Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union as a non-enumerated member.

ABOUT W7, GEAC, W20, AND G20 EMPOWER

- The Women 7 (W7) was established under the 2018 Canadian G7 Presidency, has convened five times between 2018 and 2023, and has publications from every year it has convened. Notably, the W7 neither convened, nor published in 2020, under the USA G7 Presidency, due to the extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic and global health crisis.
- Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) has been convened in every year the W7 has been convened.
- The Women 20 (W20) was launched during the 2015 G20 Turkey Presidency, has convened nine times between 2015 and 2023, and has publications from every year it has convened.
- G20 EMPOWER has been convened since 2021.
- Whereas W20 and W7 represent feminist civil society, GEAC and G20 EMPOWER include more voices from other areas, including the private sector.
- As a starting point for this Study, analysis of W7, GEAC, W20, and G20 EMPOWER publications has allowed for the creation of a timeline of engagement and advocacy on the digital gender gap and a map of issues identified and targeted on the topic of the digital gender gap by global feminist civil society, as represented at the W7 and W20 engagement groups and GEAC and G20 EMPOWER.

W20 ENGAGEMENT ON THE DIGITAL GENDER GAP AND ALIGNMENT WITH G20 HIGH-LEVEL DECLARATIONS

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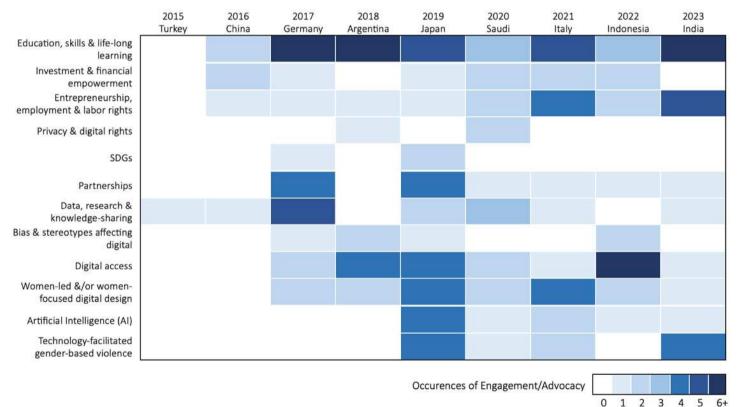
	2015 Turkey	2016 China	2017 Germany	2018 Argentina	2019 Japan	2020 Saudi	2021 Italy	2022 Indonesia	2023 India
Was the digital gender gap a W20 priority? x									
Did W20 publish a statement on digital? ^{xi}	\bigcirc							\bigcirc	
Was the digital gender gap a G20 concern? xii	Ø		Ø	Ø	Ø			Ø	

- G20 leadership has been engaged on some aspect of the digital gender gap since 2015, the year the W20 was launched under Turkey's Presidency and has been addressed by multiple G20 Ministerials, statements, and reports.
- The digital gender gap has also been a main priority issue on the W20 agenda in every year but 2015 and 2022, and in more than half of the years W20 has convened, a dedicated W20 digital statement has been published.
- Overall, at the G20 level, there is a high level of engagement and advocacy on the digital gender gap, indicating some measure of political will to address the issue at the highest levels of global governance.

Which aspects of the digital gender gap have featured most prominently under the W20 Presidencies, and how have priorities changed over time?

Presence Absence

AREAS OF W20 ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY ON THE DIGITAL GENDER GAP



12 aspects of the digital gender gap were identified through W20 publications. The darker the color, the more occurrences of engagement and advocacy there were on that topic. The spectrum of engagement runs from 0, meaning no aspect of the digital gender gap was mentioned, to 6+ which indicates that mentions of that aspect of the digital gender gap occurred six times or more. Occurrences were counted on content, not grammar. For example, a single sentence might count for two separate occurrences if there were more than one distinct point raised on some aspect of the digital gender gap.



ANALYSIS OF W20 AND G20 EMPOWER ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY ON THE DIGITAL GENDER GAP

- W20: Out of all aspects, 'Education, skills, & life-long learning' is most consistently and strongly represented, with the only exclusion being W20's inaugural year, 2015. 'Entrepreneurship, employment & labor rights' is the second most represented aspect, overall. Out of all Presidencies, the 2019 W20 Japan engagement on the digital gender gap covered the broadest range of issues and mentioned those issues more throughout its publications compared to other years. The strongest represented aspects for a single year vary widely from year to year, but engagement on the full spectrum of digital gender gap aspects has grown between 2015 and 2023, consistent with global concerns.
- G20 EMPOWER: In the 2021 G20 EMPOWER¹³ report, the three aspects most needing to be addressed were: I.) the underrepresentation of women in fast-growing job clusters and the barriers they face in acquiring necessary skills for future leadership roles, stemming from social norms, stereotypes, biases, and a consistent lack of role models, opportunities, education, and resources; 2.) the urgency of addressing gender-based employment segregation and the need for deep changes at the leadership level to overcome the current male-dominated leadership model; and 3.) the recommendation for private sector leaders across G20 countries to review their policies, leadership models, and narratives to enable women to lead future challenges and companies, focusing on skills development to address the growing gender gap in STEM and leadership skills, shifting leadership models to valorize women's skills and capacities, and shaping culture through public narrative to overcome gender inequality and biases.
- The 2022 G20 EMPOWER Playbook¹⁴ report addresses initiatives and best practices for promoting women's empowerment and leadership in the private sector. Key insights include accountability across organizational levels, consistent measuring, stakeholder communication, combining approaches to overcome bias, and updating practices for inclusivity and sustainability.
- Finally, the 2023 G20 EMPOWER Communique¹⁵ outlines socio-cultural biases, lack of safety, information asymmetry, access to finance and technology, structural barriers, limited access to labor markets, and the disproportionate burden of unpaid household and care work faced by women.
- Alignments between W20 and G20 EMPOWER show the need for a comprehensive approach to close the digital gender gap, involving changes in leadership models, skills development, and cultural shifts to promote gender equality in the workforce and leadership positions.

W7 ENGAGEMENT ON THE DIGITAL GENDER GAP AND ALIGNMENT WITH G7 HIGH-LEVEL DECLARATIONS

Was the digital gender gap a W7 priority? Did W7 publish a statement on digital? xiii Was the digital gender gap

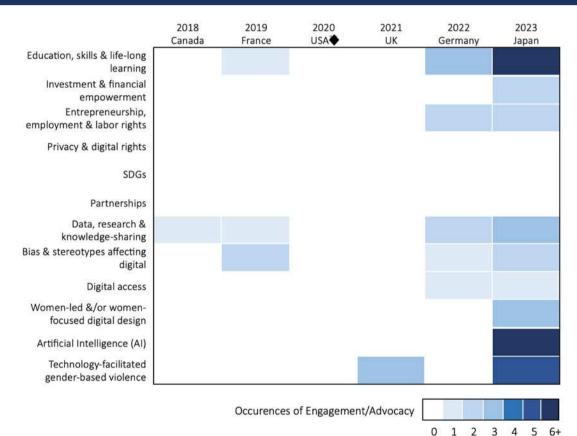
a G7 concern? xiv

2018 Canada	2019 France	2020 USA ◆	2021 UK	2022 Germany	2023 Japan
\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	0	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
\bigcirc				\bigcirc	
▶ W7 was not co	nvened under the	2020 USA G7 Pres	idency.	Presence 🕏	Absence

- Compared to G20 levels, there is a lower level of engagement on digital gender gap issues by the G7 and W7, where it was neither a priority area, nor was a dedicated digital statement published until the 2023 G7 Japan Presidency.
- At the handover from Germany, Japan declared that AI and digital issues would feature prominently in its G7 deliberations and programming.
- W7 Japan had a higher level of engagement on the digital gender gap, and also with other G7 engagement groups than in previous years. Therefore, W7 Japan had more publications for analysis than many prior presidencies, which contributed to its higher representation of digital gender gap aspects.

Which aspects of the digital gender gap have featured most prominently under the W7 Presidencies, and how have priorities changed over time?

AREAS OF W7 ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY ON THE DIGITAL GENDER GAP



12 aspects of the digital gender gap were identified through W7 publications. The darker the color, the more occurrences of engagement and advocacy there were on that topic. The spectrum of engagement runs from 0, meaning no aspect of the digital gender gap was mentioned, to 6+ which indicates that mentions of that aspect of the digital gender gap occurred six times or more. Occurrences were counted on content, not grammar. For example, a single sentence might count for two separate occurrences if there were more than one distinct point raised on some aspect of the digital gender gap.

♦ W7 was not convened under the 2020 USA G7 Presidency.

ANALYSIS OF W7 AND GEAC ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY ON THE DIGITAL GENDER GAP

- W7: W7's engagement and advocacy is less consistent and weaker before 2023, under Japan's G7 Presidency. Japan shows particularly strong engagement and advocacy on the aspects of 'Education, skills & life-long learning' and 'Artificial Intelligence (AI)'. Interestingly, the aspect of 'Data, research & knowledge-sharing' is most represented from 2018 to 2023. In the W7 Study on G7 and G20 Gender Equality Impact published under the 2022 Germany W7, one point said, "Is there a gender gap in access to digital technologies (i.e., digital divide)?", indicating that there may have been uncertainty about the digital gender gap.
- GEAC: The 2018 GEAC Report¹⁶ only emphasizes addressing gender-based violence as a critical aspect of the digital gender gap. The 2019 GEAC Recommendations Report¹⁷, focuses on accelerating the closure of the Digital Financial Services (DFS) gender gap by digitizing wage payments in sectors predominantly serving women; invest in infrastructure, tech, and housing to reduce and redistribute unpaid care work; education on STEM; and support and develop gender-responsive AI technologies.
- Due to complications of Covid-19, there was no GEAC report issued for 2020.
- The 2021 GEAC Report¹⁸ emphasizes ensuring affordable, reliable, and safe internet and mobile services for women and girls, promoting digital skills and literacy, leveraging public-private partnerships for digital inclusion, maximizing technology use in education, addressing algorithm bias, and guiding data collection and use.
- The 2022 GEAC Report¹⁹ shows a greater level of engagement and offers detailed recommendations across various themes to address the digital gender gap and promote gender equality. Key suggestions include implementing gender-responsive budgeting across government spending, providing direct funding to initiatives focusing on women's rights and gender justice, and enhancing data collection and reporting to monitor financial support for women's organizations. Additionally, it emphasizes creating opportunities for women-owned businesses, fostering public procurement as a tool for promoting women's business ownership, and ensuring equal access to venture capital for women entrepreneurs.
- The 2023 GEAC Report²⁰, advocates for initiatives to support women's participation in the global economy, addressing educational and sociocultural barriers, especially in digital literacy.
- Alignments between W7 and GEAC shows a greater level of engagement on the topic of closing the digital gender gap by GEAC than the W7 from 2018 to 2023, though the points of engagement are somewhat aligned.



CONCLUSIONS

- There is less engagement on addressing the issue at the G7 level, overall, than at the G20 level. There are significant gaps in alignment between G7, W7, and GEAC and G20, W20, and G20 EMPOWER on closing the digital gender gap. Aligning W7 and W20, and GEAC and G20 EMPOWER, engagement on this issue more closely with G7 and G20 priorities has the potential to accelerate progress.
- Advanced economies that already have high levels of digital infrastructure and human capital develop, including G20 and G7 economies, are expected to experience the benefits and challenges of emerging technologies sooner than developing or emerging economies, and the approaches taken by the G20 and G7 to respond will have far reaching effects in shaping global adoption of these technologies and the ways they impact societies²¹.
- It is crucial that G7 and G20 leaders choose their policies carefully to ensure that risks are mitigated and that the benefits technologies can bring to society do not exclude or ostracize certain groups.
- Bridging the digital gender gap now, as G7 and G20 countries are beginning to experience profound digital transformation will help to alleviate the amplification of inequalities later.
- Targeted interventions and partnerships between government, the private sector and civil society organizations, including IOs, NGOs and other organizations are crucial to ensure inclusive and impactful policies and social systems to support a fair digital transformation for all.

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xiv G7 Canada Presidency (2018) *The Charlevoix G7 Summit Communique*, pp. 2; G7 Canada Presidency (2018) *Charlevoix Commitment to End Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Abuse and Harassment in Digital Contexts*, pp. 2-3; G7 France Presidency (2019) *G7 Equality Agreement to Make Gender Equality a Global Cause*, pp.5, 8; G7 France Presidency (2019) *G7 Foreign Ministers' Communique*, 4; G7 UK Presidency (2021) *Garbis Bay G7 Summit Communique*, pp. 12; G7 UK Presidency (2021) *G7 Foreign Ministers' Policy Paper: Declaration on girls' education: recovering from COVID-19 and unlocking agenda 2030*, pp. 4; G7 Germany Presidency (2022) *G7 Leaders' Communique*, pp. 8,11-12, 23-24, 26-27; G7 Germany Presidency (2022) *Joint Statement of the G7 Gender Equality Ministers*, pp. 2, 4, 5; G7 Germany Presidency (2022) *Ministerial Declaration: G7 Digital Minister's Meeting*, pp. 5; G7 Japan Presidency (2023) *G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communique*, pp. 3-4, 25-27, 31; G7 Japan Presidency (2023) *Hiroshima Process International Guiding Principles for Organizations Developing Advanced AI System*, pp. 4-5; G7 Japan Presidency (2023) *Hiroshima Process International Code of Conduct for Organizations Developing Advanced AI Systems*, pp. 3, 4, 7; G7 Japan Presidency (2023) *Investing in Human Capital G7 Kurashiki Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting in Okayama*, pp. 7,12-13; G7 Japan Presidency (2023) *Ministerial Declaration: The G7 Digital and Tech Ministers' Meeting*, pp. 2, 6; G7 Japan Presidency (2023) *G7 Leaders' Statement on the Hiroshima AI Process*, pp. 1; G7 Japan Presidency (2023) *Tochigi-Nikko Ministerial Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, pp. 3, 4, 5.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

	ADB B7 B20 C7 C20 G7	Asia Development Bank Business 7 Business 20 Civil Society 7 Civil Society 20 Group of Seven (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union	-	S7 S20 SAI20 Startup20 STEM	Science 7 Science 20 Supreme Audit Institution 20 Startup Business 20 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Think Tank 7
•	G20	Group of Twenty (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union		T20 U7 U20 U7+ V20 W7	Think Tank 20 Urban 7 Urban 20 Alliance of Universities Values 20 Women 7
	GEAC	Gender Equality Advisory Committee		W20	Women 20
	L7	Labor 7		WHO	World Health Organization
	L20	Labor 20		WTO	World Trade Organization
	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and		Y7	Youth 7
		Development		Y20	Youth 20
	P7	Pride 7			



P20

Parliament 20