Launch Report

# A Report on the Launch of the Network of African Women in AI



*Group photo by the participants of the launch event of the Network of African Women in AI at Villa Rosa Kempinski, Nairobi*

**17.01.2025**

# List of Acronyms

AFRALTI- African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute

ICT- Information and Communication Technology

AI- Artificial Intelligence

CNN- Conventional Neural Networks

STEM- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

CEO-Chief Executive Officer

KICTANet-Kenya ICT Network

DeKUT-Dedan Kimathi University of Technology

TESPOK-Technology Service Providers of Kenya

CIPIT- Center for Intellectual Property and Information Technology

SBDO- Senior Business Development Officer

## Program Overview.

African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute (AFRALTI) is an Intergovernmental Organisation established in 1991 to supplement and spearhead ICT development efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa. AFRALTI ensures human capacity development through training, consultancy, and research. AFRALTI convened the launch event for the Network of the African Women in AI on the 17th of January 2025 at the Villa Rosa Kempinski Hotel in Nairobi. The event was hosted in partnership with Mozilla, a global community with passionate volunteers, fellows, and contributors who have been building, protecting, and shaping the internet since 1998. The launch event brought together industry players in the ICT ecosystem and those championing women's participation, collaboration, and inclusive efforts in AI. Some industry players included governmental organizations, advocates in ICT and AI, organizations championing research, private organizations in the ICT sector, non-governmental organizations, funding organizations key partners, key sector players (education, health, and agricultural sectors), and women entrepreneurs.

The launch event incorporated various approaches to identifying the opportunities, challenges, key insights, and actions to be taken in empowering women in AI and determining the long-term vision of women in AI. The launch incorporated a keynote address to identify the role of women in shaping AI for Africa's Future; 2-panel discussions on fostering ethical AI systems in Africa and the future of AI and women's economic empowerment; and roundtable engagements. Additionally, the launch event had exhibition demos, a plenary discussion to get participant's feedback on AI and the potential future focus, a series of networking sessions, and the launch ceremony. Industry experts and partners spearheaded the discussions.

The key speakers at the launch event provided insights into the topics discussed. The speakers emphasized the need for African women to participate in gender-related discussions on AI. This includes the need for women's active participation in policies and laws being formulated. The participants also emphasized the need for women's representation in spaces of AI discussions, collaboration with other industry players, and the need for diverse perspectives (black African women representation). There was also a broader emphasis on upskilling in AI, achieving social impact, the shift in the focus from charitable focus to the economic viability of the projects undertaken by women with regards to AI, and the need for the women in the launch event to be the champions in their communities for AI. Additionally, the key speakers and participants emphasized intentionality rather than having conversations without continued actions being undertaken to achieve the goal of women's representation and active participation in AI.

## Welcome Remarks.

The launch of the Network of African Women in AI commenced with welcome remarks by Elly Mathenge, the MC of the day and moderator. A few housekeeping updates were highlighted, and the host of the event, AFRALTI, was introduced together with their partner, Mozilla. The director of AFRALTI was also introduced to present his welcoming remarks.

Mr William Baraza the director of AFRALTI welcomed all the ladies to the event and thanked everyone who had made it to attend the event. The speaker reviewed the past programs and discussions around the matters of AI and showed how past conversations were mainly attended by the male gender. He specifically highlighted one project with their project partners where he could identify few female participants and categorically stated he could even just identify Ms. Alice Munyua who is the Senior Director at Mozilla as the only woman representative. The challenge highlighted was why it was only men who were pushing the technology Agenda. He highlighted Mozilla as being sensitive to gender matters in particular AI. He identified the resources available in Kenya such as the cheap internet connectivity, and the ability to store data cheaply, and therefore saw an opportunity for women to be part of the technology conversation.

AFRALTI wants to bring all women across Africa to be part of the conversation ensuring the social and economic impact of AI on the education sector, agricultural, and healthcare sectors. The director highlighted that AFRALTI is already pushing AI in healthcare. A gap in agriculture was also identified where there have been post-harvest losses. There was a call to action to use models such as the Conventional Neural Networks (CNN) to support yield in agriculture. This would not only impact food security but also food sovereignty. Mr Baraza also identified that the women in the room in leadership should not wait for others to bring change or impact but be at the forefront to remove the stereotypes while encouraging the girl child to be part of the conversation. The opening remarks by Mr. William concluded by highlighting that AI is a practical technology and allowed the participants in the event to provide insights.

Ms. Alice Munyua, the Senior Director of Mozilla Corporation was also introduced to give her welcoming remarks. Ms Alice had a brief introduction about Mozilla Corporation and started by highlighting the need to differentiate between the Mozilla Corporation which is the product corporation with the Firefox browser and the Mozilla Foundation which is a research hub and supports fellows. Mozilla Corporation was introduced as the only Corporation that supports Non-Profit principles. Mozilla Corporation protects users' data, aims to bring people into the limelight, and advocates for AI. Currently, Mozilla Foundation is the only shareholder of Mozilla Corporation. Ms. Alice highlighted Mozilla's celebration of 25 years and celebrated the AI that adheres to putting people first. She

highlighted how AI has been emerging and emphasized its social, and economic consequences and therefore the need to build technologies with us.

Ms. Alice highlighted that she works on projects built on certain principles including "Building with us and not for us". This calls to action the need to address AI biases by ensuring active participation in building technologies for ourselves and not having someone else build technologies for us. She emphasized the need to build technologies considering what the communities want and that involving African women is key. The emphasis was also on the need for simplicity of the aspects of AI, ensuring principles such as openness, transparency, accountability, and all other Mozilla principles are embedded in the technologies being built. She informed the audience that Mozilla Corporation supports  AFRALTI on their project on healthcare and looks forward to supporting other actors. She commended their partnership with AFRALTI, the AU, and other partners and looked forward to the partnership with other actors to provide inputs into the network being created.



*Ms. Alice Munyua- Senior Director, Mozilla Corporation giving her welcoming remarks and speech*

## The Role of Women in Shaping AI for Africa's Future.

The Keynote address was conducted by Dr. Shiko Gitau, the Founder and CEO of Qhala. She made a brief introduction about Qhala highlighting that Qhala works with government and other organizations in Africa to make them digital. Qhala aims to catalyze the digital space in Africa through research, development, and advisory. Dr Shiko's remarks on AI were that people make assumptions about AI and therefore started the session with a brief on what AI is, what it means to women, and the money conversation on AI. From the presentation, it was highlighted that USD 15.7 trillion would be generated globally by 2030 from AI. Africa should be making at least 25 percent of the money but it is not the case. This is because Africa is not participating fully and women in particular were not part of the conversation. It was highlighted that for AI to work there must be data, devices, connectivity, and infrastructure. Currently, there is a gap in data sets since Africa contributes only 0.02 percent of

the data used in AI digital data sets thus the emphasis on African women to participate and contribute to making sure data on African women is available. Dr Shiko goes ahead to quote

*Richard Baldwins,*
*"AI won't take your job, it is somebody using AI that will take your job".*

She also states that the Cheese has moved, and you don't need 15 people to start a company, you can start your own company alone. From the UN statistics, it is projected that the Kenyan workforce will be 95 million people by 2050. From the current statistics, women are not fully participating and are not fully represented since they still hold traditional roles. Shiko highlighted why women matter in AI development and with the growing population women need to know their growing importance in AI. There was a greater emphasis on diverse perspectives, by incorporating black African women and reducing the bias of AI.

Key insights looked into were the 22 percent of the representation of women in the global workforce but very little being in leadership representation. Dr. Shiko highlighted the need to reduce biases, the need for a shift in mindset, and the need for a systematic approach to include women. She then called to action the need for African women to access information without implications, having information tailored in the local language and bringing local solutions for certain things or having alternative solutions to problems. All these aspects should culminate in the localization of AI. The speaker then highlighted some of the barriers women in Africa face in AI including limited access to STEM education, gender stereotypes, lack of funding, and the policies set for women. Dr. Shiko highlighted she has been working with partners to push women in AI in Kenya. She emphasized the need for women to push for policies by being proactive, not confining in their own spaces, women to start from where they are, and them to pull other women.



*Dr. Shiko Gitau- Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Qhala addressing the launch event participants*

## Fostering Ethical AI Systems in Africa.

The launch event incorporated two-panel discussions. The first panel discussion moderated by Eng. Edith Njeru was governed by the theme "Fostering Ethical AI Systems in Africa".The moderator gave the panelists the chance to introduce themselves and give insights on AI. Some of the key issues the panelists were to discuss were how to implement AI in the education systems, how to make data more open, and what the cultural beliefs or concerns are. Additionally, the panelists were to provide insights on the convening of the AI principles in Kenya, how AI can serve some of the client's betters by providing diverse solutions such as providing reports on cyber/server attacks, protection of data and how women can have a voice in AI through building inclusive datasets.

One of the key discussions was on the challenges that the panelists have identified to be unique to Africans in matters of AI. The main challenges identified were the lack of African representation in the making of the rules, the tools, and the tools centers of AI. There was a need for the women in the launch to champion a space where Africans are represented in the creation of tools and rules. Additionally, skills transfer was identified as a major challenge whereby Africans are moving to the US to create tools for AI for them. It was identified that there was a lot of talent among the Africans and most of it was taken abroad. This was major because of the lack of resources including a tools center for AI in African countries.

*"We are building for others and not for ourselves"*

*Dr. Jane Munga- Fellow at Carnegie Endowment for*
*International Peace Africa Program*

Additionally, insights were made into how African women do things and how certain communities in Africa view ethics. This was to inform the designing of ethical AI policies while incorporating the values of African women. Remarks were made on the patriarchal nature of African communities and the roles of women in society. There was a concern in biases, and women being left out even when certain conversations were being pushed and advocated for. African women have often faced the challenges of work-life balance where they have to play a role in their homes thus having no time to be part of the AI conversation. The panelist's emphasis was on the lack of African women's representation in leadership positions not only in building AI systems but also in research and policy. There was an emphasis on the need to incorporate values when designing ethical AI policies, the need to define how ethics look in African communities, and the need to look into other factors like the lack of infrastructure and connectivity in Africa.

Dr Juliet Muso, a lecturer from DeKUT University provided insights on how the government and education institutions can collaborate or participate in developing systems in AI in Africa. She identified challenges of being underfunded, lack of open data systems, and the lack of frameworks/ regulations in AI in Africa as the main challenges in the education system. Dr. Muso identified the need for non-profit-oriented funding in institutions for the funding to be advanced into the creation of systems that bring about social impact. There was also the need for the creation of open data systems with anonymized data to ensure data privacy, the need for implementation

AFRALTI
AFRICAN ADVANCED LEVEL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INSTITUTE

of ethics in AI in the curriculum, and the need for the development of frameworks in collaboration with the government and industry players.

Dr Grace Githaiga, the CEO and Convenor, KICTANet provided insights into some of the Ethical policies in AI and how women can come on board in providing innovative, informed, and adaptive policies. Some of her remarks were on how 'AI hallucinates' thus the need for participation in creating ethical policies. She highlighted the barriers to African women's participation in the spaces including the high registration fees. There was the need for close collaboration and working with the key stakeholders in the industry including the government and technical experts. She, therefore, challenged the women in the launch to push for being part of the spaces and bring their ethical concerns to the spaces. Additionally, she encouraged women to participate in the standard setting of government papers and policies. She emphasized that women should not just support what is written on the papers but bring their presentations on board so that women can have a strong voice in matters concerning AI. After participation in standard setting and policy settings, women were encouraged to follow up and see what has been implemented and what has not been implemented.

Ms. Fiona Asonga, the CEO of TESPOK echoed the panelist's insights by stating the need for collaboration. Her emphasis was on the intentionality in collaboration where actors in the space should stop acting as silos but intentionally collaborate to create a regulatory framework. There was a call for intentionality in terms of infrastructure use, collaboration with governments, and the policies being developed. The use of sandboxes was highlighted to be key in the creation of regulatory frameworks which prevent actors in the space from working in silos thus having different regulators in the ecosystem.

*"We cannot expect the technology to work for us if the people using it do not have a value system that can be applied and translated into that technology."*

*Dr. Fiona Asonga, CEO, of TESPOK*

To summarize the insights from the panel discussion there was a call for intentionality by incorporating capacity building for women at the grassroots level, recognizing the men who champion women to be part of the conversation while working with men to bring women on board. Additionally, there was an emphasis on the need for data, getting women to build some of the AI systems, and the creation of responsible women computing clubs that will champion the ethical concerns in AI for women.

*Photo of the panelist: From right Moderator- Eng. Edith Njeru (Rosy Telecom Limited), Dr. Jane Munga (Fellow at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Africa Program), Dr. Grace Githaiga (CEO and Convenor, KICTANet), Ms. Fiona Asonga (CEO TESPOK), Mrs. Rebecca Ryakitambo (Co-founder at KsGEN) and Dr. Juliet Moso (Lecturer, School of Computer Science and IT at DeKUT).*

## The Future of AI and Women's Economic Empowerment.

The second panel discussion, moderated by Elly Mathenge, focused on the future of AI and women's economic empowerment. Key panelists explored the opportunities that AI can provide for women across various sectors. The panelists provided insights into how AI can be adopted to empower women, focusing on the economic benefits of AI even to women at the grassroots level.

Dr Angela Ndaka of Equity, as well as an AI in Agriculture Expert at Athena Infonomics, provided insights on AI and gender highlighting the unique nature of African women in terms of color, and different cultures. She highlighted how different sectors generalize the gender conversation with terms such as diversity, inclusivity, and equity without really defining broadly what this means for African women. There was a need for a broader definition of diversity, inclusivity, and aspects such as equity as far as women were involved. One of the central issues raised was the challenge of access to funding. Dr. Angela Ndaka emphasized that controlling access to funding is key to empowering women in AI. Without financial support, it is difficult for women to innovate, scale, and integrate AI into their businesses. She also emphasized that AI holds immense potential for women in agriculture, particularly when integrated into their careers. She pointed out that AI can optimize agricultural practices, making them more efficient and productive, but to truly benefit, women must actively engage with AI in their careers, whether in

agriculture or sectors like education and health. It was also highlighted that to build a more inclusive AI ecosystem, we must first understand where women are coming from and what they have been experiencing in terms of power. Historically, women have had less access to technology and opportunities in the tech sector due to the time divide and the pre-existing cultural norms.

Ms Florence Ogonjo dived deep into the role of policy and gender inclusion in AI. She highlighted the need to create awareness of how women can tap into AI space, tools, and the internet space. Ms. Ogonjo emphasized the need for women to upskill in the internet space, getting the necessary tools that they can use on the internet and AI. She argued that policies and laws need to be designed with gender inclusivity in mind, ensuring that women have equal access to education, funding, and opportunities to ensure women benefit economically and the greater achievement of societal development. The panelist agreed that to ensure gender considerations, women need to participate holistically in the development of AI strategies, in Education, policies, and Technology. Ms. Florence Ogonjo stressed that AI solutions must incorporate the diverse needs of women across different industries, creating a space where gender is always a factor in decision-making processes.



From the right, Moderator Elly Mathenge, Dr. Angela Ndaka (Equity and AI in Agriculture Expert, Athena Infonomics), and Ms. Florence Ongojo ( Research fellow at AI Policy Center for Intellectual Property and Information Technology (CIPIT), Strathmore University.

AFRALTI
AFRICAN ADVANCED LEVEL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INSTITUTE

Ms. Maria Maali highlighted the social impact of AI and the need for AI to be comprehensive to create a lasting change within society. Ms. Marie started with an emphasis on African women's representation in AI spaces. She highlighted World Bank data on the population of women vs men in Kenya which is at 50.44%. She highlighted that representation is important as it ensures that solutions and products created by AI for women will include their input from the start. To avoid all these, women need to represent themselves in rooms where these solutions are being made and they create products suited for them by themselves. She highlighted the need for African women to use AI to make money by running AI-enabled businesses and content creation. Women in the construction industry are the ones constructing the data centers in Africa, and the use of AI in different industries such as healthcare in making better diagnostics. Ms. Maria's emphasis was on women to make sure they were making money in AI in whatever field or industry they were and stated that everyone can benefit from AI. Additionally, Ms. Marie emphasized the importance of natural language processing and the translation of data using AI in languages that people can understand. She categorically stated that even women at the grassroots level can benefit from AI by this factor.

Ms. Annette Nasiaki Okello, the Head of ICT, at the National Construction Authority, shared insights on how the women in the room can be the first ambassadors to communities on AI. She highlighted that women are not only consumers but also creators. There are many opportunities in the space and what was needed was only identifying the opportunities and women taking up roles and a step in actualizing the opportunities. Ms. Nasiaki identified the need for programs like those on Coursera but created by African women in African languages. This will ensure the upskilling of African women in a language that is easy to understand.

Ms. Prudence Kirimi, the Deputy Director of MIS, the Public Service Commission concluded the panel discussion by providing insights into how AI can be integrated into industries. She highlighted in the manufacturing sector how AI can be integrated to simplify processes, increase productivity, and markets, and get consumer-demand data. This would largely inform the production capacities, and what to produce. In the healthcare sector, she highlighted the importance of AI and the goal AI can play in reducing maternal deaths.

*From the right, Ms. Prudence Kirimi ( Deputy Director of MIS, Public Service Commission), Ms. Annette Nasiaki Okello ( Head of ICT, National Construction Authority), and Ms. Maria Maali (Senior Partner Development Manager, Microsoft).*

There was a discussion on the need for closer collaboration between the technical industry and the educational sector. The question posed was how can we ensure that the tech industry and educational institutions work together to prepare the next generation for AI-driven economies? The panelists agreed that AI should be integrated into all sectors, and education must focus on equipping children with the skills needed to create technology that serves their communities. The panel concluded with a call to action for women in AI to be role models and mentors for future generations. As the first ambassadors in the AI space, the panelists encouraged the participants to build solutions with AI in mind and to actively participate in shaping the future of AI, not just as users, but as innovators.

## Designing Inclusive AI Solutions for African Communities.

In the roundtable following the theme "Designing Inclusive AI Solutions for African Communities", Veronica Rose, an expert in IT Audit, data privacy, and cybersecurity, kicked off the discussion with a thought-provoking question: "Do you think technology has emotions?" This set the stage for an engaging session where participants worked together in groups to explore various aspects of AI's role in African communities.

Table discussions included a range of interesting questions and answers. For instance, Table 1 identified AI tools like ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, You.com, and Meet Geek, noting that many participants use AI for meetings, content generation, and even podcasts. Table 2 discussed contributions to AI development projects, with participants highlighting AI applications in healthcare, VR, and robotics, motivated by labor shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 3 focused on AI's ethical concerns, including data privacy, bias, and the need for clearer accountability and policies, especially for rural areas. Table 4 addressed Kenya's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, identifying Section 3.5 on pages 24-27 as the section on AI readiness. Table 5 explored societal challenges AI can address in Africa, including gender stereotypes, job creation, and enhancing rural women's ability to generate income through content creation.

Table 6 emphasized the need for balancing technological advancements with cultural and ethical considerations through inclusivity, transparency, and education. Table 7 proposed strategies to promote community participation in AI design, such as educational awareness and diverse recruitment channels. Table 8 provided a clear definition of AI as a field of computer science focused on tasks that require human-like intelligence, including learning and problem-solving. Table 9 discussed ethical AI solutions, with participants emphasizing the importance of data privacy, transparency, and public training on ethical AI use. Finally, Table 10 responded to Veronica's opening question, agreeing that AI does not possess emotions. The roundtable highlighted a diverse range of insights, showcasing the importance of designing AI solutions that are culturally and ethically aligned with the needs of African communities.



*The picture above captures a vibrant and engaging moment from the roundtable engagement.*

# 1.    AI Application: Human Elephant Conflict.

Exhibition demos were presented to demonstrate AI Applications in Africa. The First Exhibition Demo was presented by Mrs. Rebecca Ryakitambo, the co-founder of KsGEN and Core23lab. The presentation was to identify AI applications in the mitigation of human-animal conflict across Tanzania. From a young age, Mrs. Rebecca identified human interaction with animals due to the growing population of humans and their expansion into wildlife resources. The communities living near the parks faced conflicts where elephants would destroy human agricultural produce and plants including sisal and watermelons. To solve the human-animal conflict there was the need to incorporate information from the community and technical knowledge. She, therefore, wrote a proposal to National Geographic to use the internet, citizen science, and AI to solve the challenge. This saw the creation of a camera catered specifically to the needs of the people. The camera took into consideration factors such as the lack of electricity in the communities they were to be used, the connectivity issue, and night vision sensing. Additionally, the camera had to put in place a facial recognition feature for elephants' faces and the ability to send signals or messages about the activities to wildlife authorities.

The camera was, therefore, able to capture activities in certain areas where elephants would mostly be found. To ensure a prompt response from the authorities an app, 'the WildNet App' was created so that the locals could send information or incident reports to authorities. The app had features to put images or videos and was translated into the local language for easy understanding of the community. This enabled victims' compensation from the government and reduced human and elephant conflict. Mrs. Rebecca recognized the need to use AI to create solutions that are beneficial to communities and would look into insights to ensure the communities gain monetary value from using the Application system. One challenge that she recognized was the people's lack of understanding of data privacy and ensuring curating policies in local and easy language to understand.



*Mrs. Rebecca Ryakitambo presenting on the application of AI to solve human-elephant conflict*

## 2.       The Plate AI: The Black Rhino Conservation Systems.

Ms. Fivian Tulele had a similar approach to presenting her insights into her conservation project - the conservation of black rhinos. In doing research and projects around conservation Fivian identified the challenge where black rhinos started to decline in Serengeti National Park. She researched to identify the reason and found the use of microchips to track down rhinos within the park. There were 570 black rhinos in the park 3 years ago but in 2024 there were only 130 remaining. This is when they realized when the microchips were removed from the rhinos they were left with wounds that left untreated would cause their death. She, therefore, recommended the use of the black rhino conservation systems to track rhinos and curb black rhino deaths within Serengeti National Park. This is a system that uses Mrs. Rebecca Ryakitambo's App and a camera that identifies the black rhinos, thus eliminating the need for microchips. This is expected to decrease black rhino deaths within Serengeti National Park. A similar technology is used to track pigeons within Pemba and ensure their stay within the environment through sound recognition.



*Ms. Fivian Tulele, a 2nd-year diploma student at Don Bosco KIITEC in Arusha Tanzania presenting on AI Applications using her  Black Rhino Conservation Systems.*

## Participant's Feedback on A.I and Potential Future Focus.

The Launch event incorporated a participants' feedback session where the participants reflected on the earlier discussions from the keynote address to the exhibition demos and provided insights on the program's activities.

Some of the key questions asked at the end of the session and the things to reflect on were: How the participants see African women in AI shape out, on a personal level the roles the participants were committing to play to the AI ecosystem, and the contributions the participants were going to make to the broader African continent. Participants were also provided with a survey to provide insights into the actualization of the Network of African Women in AI.

## Participant's Feedback and Insights.

A feedback survey was conducted to gather insights from attendees on their experiences. A total of 40 participants responded to the survey, providing valuable feedback for future events. Below is a breakdown of the questions in the survey, their responses, and actionable recommendations from the women participants of the launch event.
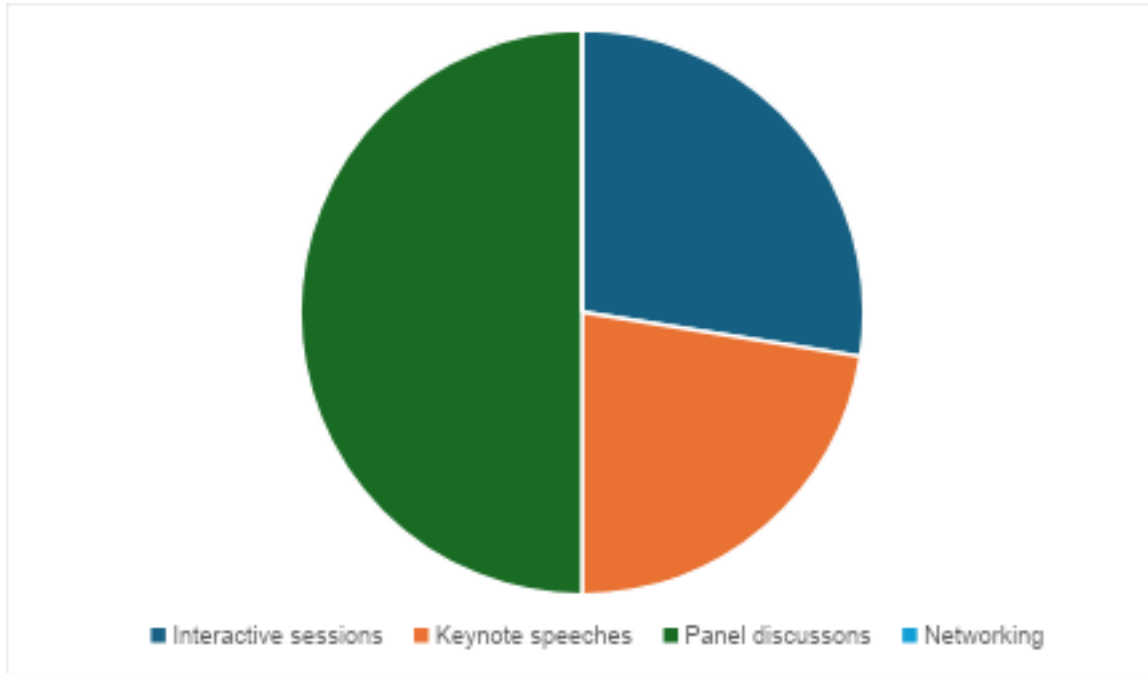
### Event Organization and Delivery rating.
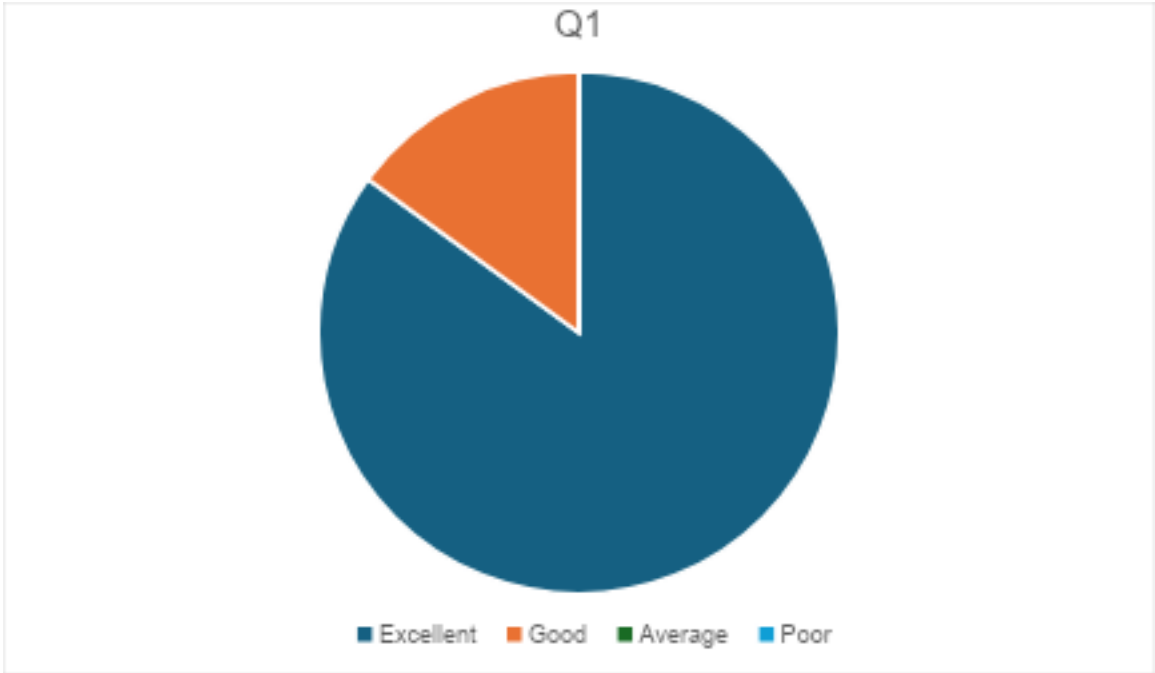


The pie chart above indicates the participants' rating of the event organization and delivery

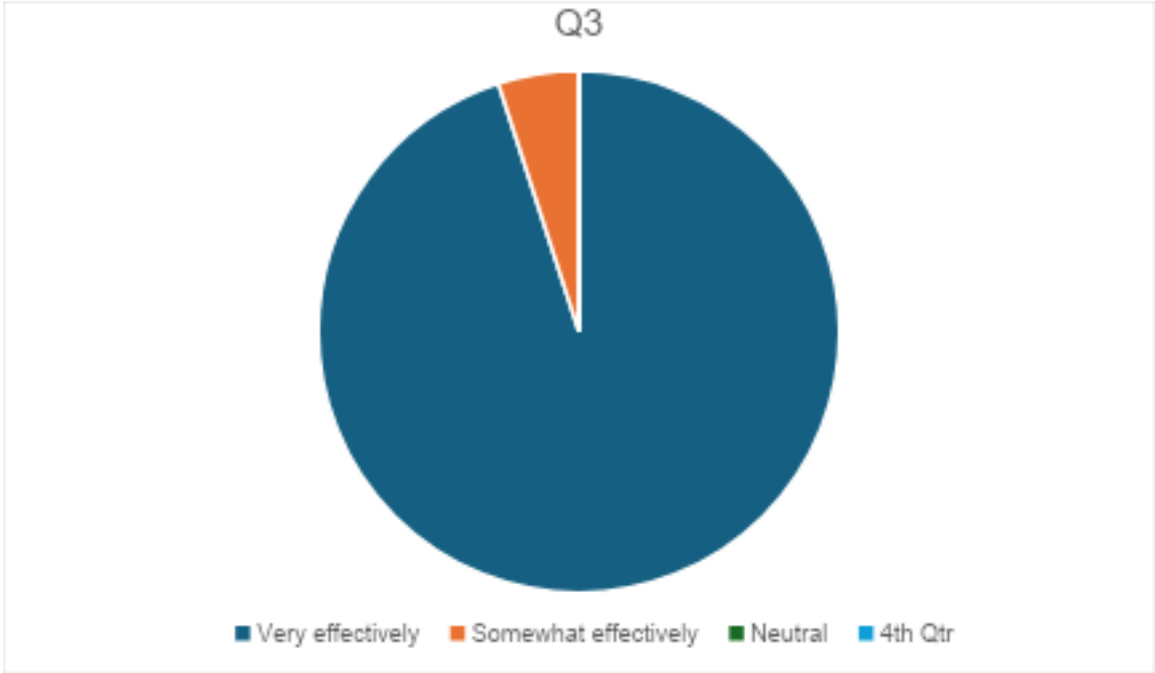|   | RATINGS | NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS |
|---|---------|------------------------|
| 1 | Excellent | 34 |
| 2 | Good | 6 |
| 3 | Average | 0 |
| 4 | Poor | 0 |

## Most Impactful Aspect of the Event



The below table summarizes the participants' rating on the most impactful aspect of the event

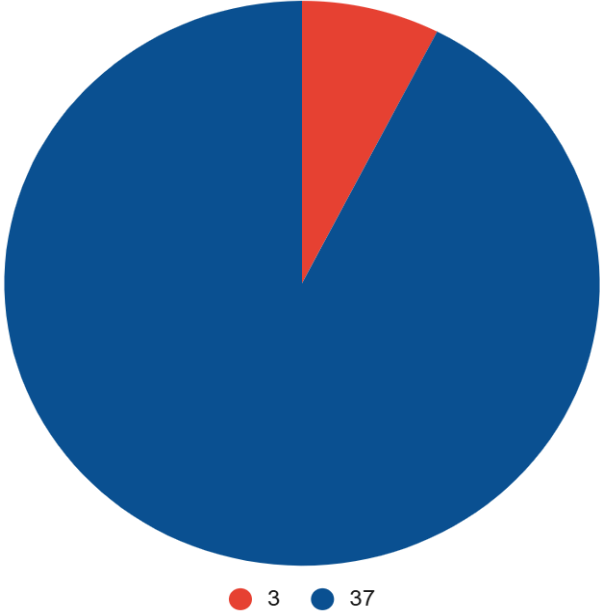|   | Rate | Number of participants |
|---|------|------------------------|
| 1 | Interactive sessions | 11 |
| 2 | Keynote speeches | 9 |
| 3 | Panel discussions | 20 |
| 4 | Networking | 0 |

### Effectiveness in Addressing Women's Empowerment in AI



Below is a table summarizing the participants' ratings on the effectiveness of the launch in addressing women's empowerment in AI.

|   | Rate | Number of participants |
|---|------|------------------------|
| 1 | Very effectively | 38 |
| 2 | Somewhat effectively | 2 |
| 3 | Neutral | 0 |
| 4 | Ineffectively | 0 |

## Exploration of Key Themes: Ethical AI, Women's Empowerment, and Inclusivity



● 3   ● 37

The table below summarizes the participants' ratings in the exploration of the key themes in the event.

|   | Rate | Number of participants |
|---|------|------------------------|
| 1 | Very well | 37 |
| 2 | Somewhat well | 3 |
| 3 | Neutral | 0 |
| 3 | Not well | 0 |

## Likelihood of Future Engagement with African Women in AI Network
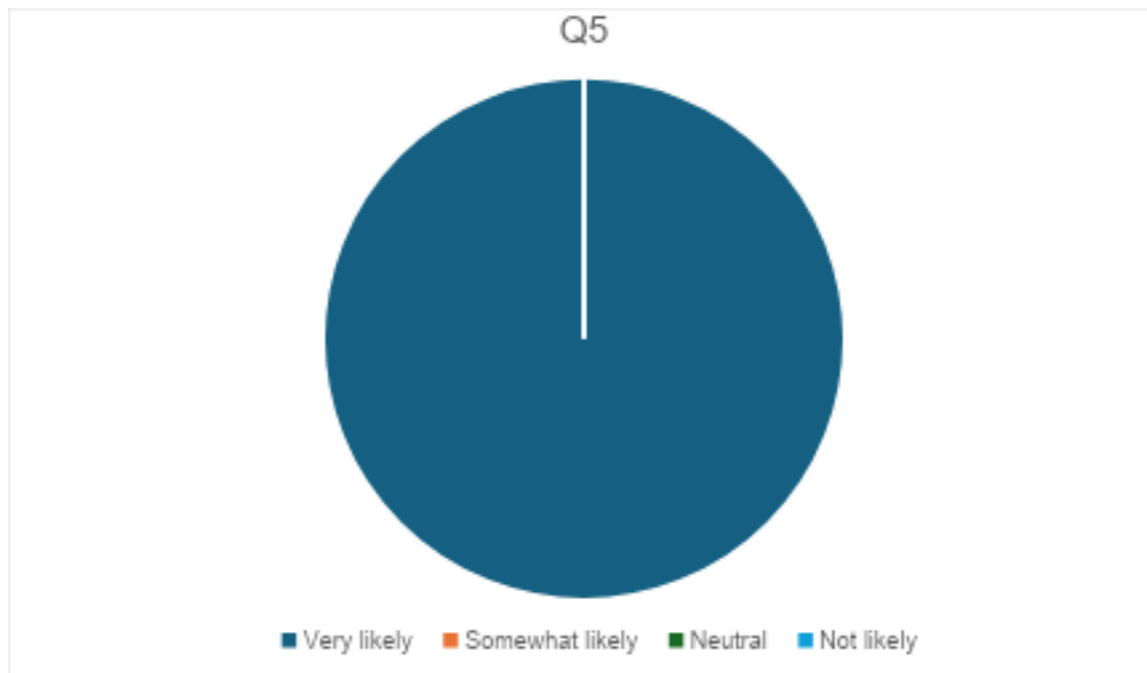


In the above chart, all participants chose option A (Very Likely) to be part of future engagements with African women in the AI Network

## Recommendations for Advancing Ethical AI, Women's Empowerment, and Inclusivity.

- **Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration**:
  - o Create platforms to share knowledge, best practices, and innovations in AI development and deployment tailored to the African context.
  - o Foster collaboration between academia, industry, and government to drive inclusive AI development.
  - o Establish a dedicated online portal for information sharing and networking among women in AI.

- **Research and Ethical AI Development**:
  - o Invest in localized research on AI ethics, with a focus on cultural, social, and economic dynamics in Africa.
  - o Promote studies on the implications of AI in addressing inequalities and ensuring fairness.
  - o Explore use cases that recognize local contexts and address the diverse challenges faced by African communities.

- **Community Engagement**:

- o Engage with local communities during AI development to incorporate their needs, perspectives, and feedback.
- o Conduct awareness campaigns in grassroots areas to educate women about AI and its opportunities.
- o Develop strategies to navigate cultural influences that may hinder women's participation in AI.

- **Capacity Building**:
  - o Organize workshops, training programs, and capacity-building initiatives to enhance AI skills among women.
  - o Develop mentorship programs to support women at different stages of their AI careers.
  - o Collaborate with educational institutions to integrate AI-related content into school and university curricula, ensuring accessibility for young women.

- **Awareness and Advocacy**:
  - o Increase awareness about AI's impact on women through targeted campaigns, storytelling, and real-world case studies.
  - o Highlight AI projects led by women to inspire others and promote inclusivity.
  - o Advocate for the inclusion of women in AI policy-making and leadership roles.

- **Infrastructure and Resource Support**:
  - o Address infrastructure challenges that hinder women's access to technology and AI tools.
  - o Support women entrepreneurs in leveraging AI to grow their businesses and solve local problems.
  - o Provide resources for data access, storage, and protection tailored to women's needs.

- **Data Protection and Privacy**:
  - o Raise awareness about data protection and privacy, especially for women engaging with AI systems.
  - o Develop guidelines and best practices for ethical data collection and usage.

- **Policy and Inclusivity**:
  - o Advocate for policies that address social, economic, and digital inequalities affecting women in AI.
  - o Include women in decision-making roles to shape policies that govern AI development and deployment.
  - o Promote gender-sensitive frameworks to ensure equitable access to AI opportunities.

- **Cultural Considerations**:
  - o Address cultural barriers that limit women's participation in AI through culturally sensitive awareness campaigns.

- o Develop strategies to balance cultural norms with the need for greater inclusivity in AI.

- **Ongoing Engagement and Events**:
  - o Host annual events to celebrate and amplify the voices of women in AI.
  - o Organize hackathons, conferences, and meetups focused on ethical AI and inclusivity.
  - o Establish a comprehensive database of women in AI to facilitate networking and collaboration.

- **Practical Use Cases and Storytelling**:
  - o Showcase how AI is being applied in various fields (e.g., healthcare, agriculture, education) to inspire women to contribute.
  - o Share success stories of African women leading AI projects to motivate others.

- **Building Trust Through Collaboration**:
  - o Facilitate partnerships between stakeholders to ensure transparency and build trust in AI initiatives.
  - o Promote cross-border collaborations to share resources, expertise, and best practices.

- **Social and Economic Empowerment**:
  - o Use AI to address existing wealth, social, and digital divides.
  - o Empower women to take bold steps, voice their ideas, and advocate for themselves in the AI ecosystem.

## Recommendations for Building a Thriving African Women in AI Network.

- **Establish Communities of Practice**:
  - o Create active and inclusive communities where women in AI can collaborate, share knowledge, and grow together.
  - o Encourage communities tailored to specific AI applications, such as health, education, and law.

- **Regular Training and Capacity Building**:
  - o Organize frequent training programs to equip women with the skills needed to excel in AI.
  - o Develop mentorship programs connecting experienced professionals with young women entering the field.

- **Strategic Partnerships**:
  - o Build partnerships with key stakeholders, including governments, private sector organizations, academia, and non-profits.
  - o Foster regional collaboration to leverage resources and expertise across Africa.

**AFRALTI**
AFRICAN ADVANCED LEVEL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INSTITUTE

- **Global Impact and Visibility**:
  - o Aim for African Women in AI to take a global leadership role in AI advancements.
  - o Showcase success stories and achievements of African women in AI on public platforms to inspire and motivate others.

- **Engaging and Inclusive Events**:
  - o Host regular events such as workshops, conferences, and forums, ensuring they occur quarterly or biannually.
  - o Organize informal meetups, breakfasts, or networking sessions to foster community connections.

- **Collaborative Projects and Forums**:
  - o Introduce projects where women in AI can work together to solve real-world problems.
  - o Create forums similar to McKinsey's Next Generation Women Leaders Program to teach skills, discuss trends, and provide networking opportunities.

- **Proactive Implementation and Ethics**:
  - o Focus on the proactive implementation of AI solutions that address societal needs.
  - o Emphasize ethical practices in AI development and deployment to ensure fairness and inclusivity.

- **Empowering Women and Families**:
  - o Support women-led projects and initiatives that drive social and economic relevance.
  - o Engage and educate families to foster a supportive environment for women in AI.

- **Strengthening the Network**:
  - o Formalize the network and raise awareness of its activities to ensure tangible benefits for members.
  - o Develop an online presence through WhatsApp groups or other digital platforms to facilitate ongoing communication.

- **Policy Advocacy and Curriculum Development**:
  - o Engage policymakers through representatives to shape policies that support women in AI.
  - o Advocate for curriculum reviews at all education levels to integrate AI from primary to university education.

- **Integration with Local Communities**:
  - o Continuously engage with local communities to raise awareness and encourage participation.
  - o Ensure AI solutions developed address grassroots-level challenges and cultural contexts.

- **Work Plans and Strategic Focus**:
    - o Define clear work plans and objectives for the network to maintain focus and measure progress.
    - o Highlight key issues and propose actionable policies during regular forums.

- **Sector-Wide Collaboration**:
    - o Foster collaboration between academia, industry, and the private sector to drive innovation and inclusivity.
    - o Promote the development of women-centered AI models addressing gender-specific challenges.

- **Sensitization and Public Engagement**:
    - o Increase sensitization efforts targeting women leaders, particularly on social media platforms.
    - o Raise awareness about AI's potential and encourage participation through storytelling and advocacy campaigns.

- **Recognition and Support**:
    - o Celebrate women's achievements in AI and provide platforms for them to share their stories and ideas.
    - o Offer financial and institutional support to women-driven AI initiatives.

## Launch Ceremony.

The launch ceremony was initiated by Ms. Sandra Ongaki the SBDO at AFRALTI and Ms. Alice Munyua the Senior Director of Mozilla Corporation. Ms. Alice remarked that Mozilla Corporation wants to build with us and for us and invited a few women to launch the Network of African Women in AI together with Ms. Sandra Ongaki.

*The launch Ceremony of the Network of African Women in AI*

## Conclusion & Action Steps.

In conclusion, the event launch was a resounding success, achieving its objectives and exceeding expectations. The meticulous planning, effective teamwork, and enthusiastic participation of all stakeholders contributed to an engaging and impactful session. The positive feedback from attendees underscores the event's value and its potential to inspire further initiatives in the future. As we move forward, the lessons learned and connections made during this launch will undoubtedly serve as a strong foundation for future endeavors. This event has not only highlighted women's capabilities but also reinforced AFRALTI's commitment to delivering excellence in every undertaking.

## Closing

The Senior Director at Mozilla Corporation finalized the launch ceremony by inviting all women in the room to be part of the Network of Women in AI, by providing insights, collaborating, and bringing on board actors and recommendations on how to implement the Network.  The event closed with the invitation of all event participants to a networking session and cocktail thereafter.