



ALL ABOUT A4AI:

OUR MISSION, OUR WORK & WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

KEY MESSAGES	2
WHY IS AFFORDABLE INTERNET ACCESS IMPORTANT?	3
THE CURRENT STATE OF INTERNET ACCESS AROUND THE WORLD	3
WHAT IS A4AI'S MISSION?	4
HOW DOES A4AI PLAN TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?	4
WHAT HAS A4AI ACHIEVED TO DATE?	5
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	6

APRIL 2016



KEY MESSAGES

- **Only 1 in 3 people in the developing world are connected to the Internet – primarily due to high costs.** This entrenches a digital divide that severely hampers socio-economic progress and must be addressed urgently.
- **Affordable access is still a long way off, particularly for those living in poverty.** Our [2015-16 Affordability Report](#) shows that for those living in poverty (i.e., under \$3.10/day), not a single developing or emerging country can claim to meet the affordability benchmark set by the United Nations (UN) Broadband Commission of broadband priced at less than 5% of monthly income. Just nine of the countries studied can claim to meet that target for the bottom 20% of income earners.
- **The Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) is the first truly global coalition to tackle this issue head-on and is the world’s broadest technology sector coalition.** It is a diverse and international initiative, with around 80 member organisations from across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors in both developed and developing countries.
- **A4AI’s mission** is to reduce the cost of a basic broadband connection, thereby enabling millions more to afford to connect. To achieve this, A4AI is calling on world leaders to adopt a new, more ambitious affordability target: 1GB of mobile broadband priced at 2% or less of average monthly income.
- **A4AI is focused on driving policy and regulatory change to create the conditions for open, competitive and innovative broadband markets.** A4AI believes the key barriers to broadband affordability and universal access are out-dated or ill-formed policy and regulatory frameworks. A4AI is working directly with national governments and in-country stakeholders to implement the policy and regulatory conditions needed to make broadband more affordable and accessible.
- **A4AI incorporates diverse viewpoints.** Concrete change depends on unifying diverse actors and viewpoints in pursuit of a collective goal that delivers both social and commercial dividends. To this end, A4AI works with a wide range of organisations around the world and in partner countries to identify barriers to affordability and determine the policy and regulatory reforms needed to drive down the cost to connect.
- **A4AI is action-focused.** The Alliance is currently working in six countries – Nigeria, Ghana, Mozambique, Liberia, the Dominican Republic and Myanmar. In each member country, we form a local stakeholder coalition that works to identify key local barriers and devise tailored solutions to drive down prices. A4AI advises, educates and supports the development of policy and regulatory reform to be led by these local players.
- **A4AI’s work is underpinned by rigorous research.** A4AI released the third edition of its annual [Affordability Report](#) in February 2016. The report looks at the current state of Internet affordability in 51 developing countries around the world and explores specific policy areas that are allowing for rapid progress toward affordability goals. The [2015-16 report](#) specifically examines how poverty and income inequality are masking the true state of affordability, and lays out recommendations for overcoming these barriers to access. This annual report, along with regularly produced country case studies, informs A4AI’s policy agenda and set of good practices.



WHY IS AFFORDABLE INTERNET ACCESS IMPORTANT?

Over 4 billion people around the world remain unconnected to the Internet. The majority of this offline population is in the developing world, entrenching a digital divide that severely hampers socio-economic progress. Research shows that affordable access can better the lives of citizens in many important areas.

- **Health:** Remote diagnosis, advice, treatment, and health education, underpinned by affordable Internet access, could address 80% of the health issues of patients in poorly staffed rural clinics in Africa. This would reduce the cost of treating chronic disease by 10 to 20% and save an hour a day of nurses' time. ([McKinsey, 2013](#))
- **Gender equality:** Closing the mobile gender gap and bringing 600 million more women online could increase global GDP by US\$13-18 billion. ([Intel, 2013](#))
- **Employment:** In India, broadband has already generated nearly 9 million direct and indirect jobs, while a 1% increase in broadband penetration could add US\$2.7 billion or 0.11% to Indian GDP in 2015. ([Broadband Commission, 2013](#))

INTERNET ACCESS AROUND THE WORLD

Across the globe, 43% of people are connected to the Internet.

This means that 57% — or 4.2 billion people globally — remain offline. While over 82% of people in the developed world are connected, just 35% of those in the developing world have Internet access. In Africa, just 20% of the population is online; across the world's Least Developed Countries, this figure plummets to 9.5%. ([Broadband Commission 2015](#))

The high cost to connect continues to exclude billions from the digital revolution.

Most of the 4+ billion offline today are not connected because they can't afford to be. The global goal to provide affordable, universal Internet access focuses specifically on connecting people across the world's least developed countries, yet 70% of people in these countries cannot afford a basic, 500MB per month broadband plan.

Poverty and income inequality are masking the true state of Internet affordability.

While 25 of the 51 countries surveyed for A4AI's 2015-16 Affordability Report have met the UN target for "affordable Internet" — 500 MB of mobile data priced below 5% of national average income — not a single country analysed met the target for those living in poverty (\$3.10 or less a day), while just nine countries met the target for the bottom 20% of income earners.

Women are far less likely to be able to access the Internet affordably than men.

Women, on average, earn 30–50% less than men. This income disparity diminishes the ability of women to afford to access, adopt, and benefit from a broadband connection. The Web Foundation's 2015 [Women's Rights Online](#) research shows that poor women in urban areas across ten developing countries are 50% less likely to be connected to the Internet than men in the same age group, with similar levels of education and household income. Though the extent of the gap varies across the regions, the Internet access gender gap is apparent throughout the world.



Those living in rural areas are also less likely to secure affordable Internet access.

This is for two primary reasons: (1) incomes tend to be lower in rural areas, resulting in a higher real cost to connect; and (2) challenges associated with infrastructure deployment in rural areas result in limited opportunities for access or in access prices that are significantly more expensive than those in urban areas.

Policy is the most important tool to drive down prices.

New and exciting technologies are emerging that can drive access costs down quickly. But the best technologies in the world won't help if out-dated or ill-conceived policies and regulations prevent them from doing so. Policy change can unlock benefits, fast.

WHAT IS A4AI'S MISSION?

To reduce broadband prices and enable universal, affordable access to the Internet.

Our mission is squarely focused on overcoming the affordability barrier to access for women, the poor, rural dwellers, and other marginalised populations that remain priced out of the digital revolution. Specifically, we are working to achieve a “1 for 2” affordability target: 1GB of mobile broadband priced at 2% or less of average monthly income. Why this target? Our [research](#) shows that at this price point, even those earning the least in a society should be able to afford Internet access.

HOW DOES A4AI PLAN TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

Bringing together the right stakeholders to affect change.

Tackling such an ambitious project requires a collective effort. A4AI is the world's broadest technology sector coalition and brings together over a wide range of key players from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors — organisations with the experience, influence and resources to make a real difference.

Building consensus.

A4AI's diverse member organisations have all endorsed a set of [policy and regulatory good practice recommendations](#) for delivering affordable Internet, and are working together to advocate for their implementation. These practices operate on the understanding that open, competitive and innovative broadband markets are key to reducing connectivity costs for operators and for consumers. A4AI recognises that some populations will remain beyond the reach of the market, and so we also advocate for public access solutions (e.g., community WiFi, free or subsidised access in public schools and community centres) to connect women, the poor, and other marginalised populations that might still be unable to afford an Internet connection.

Working directly with national governments.

A4AI has signed formal memorandums of understanding with six governments around the world — Ghana, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, the Dominican Republic, and Myanmar — and is working



directly with these countries to bring down the cost of Internet access. In these countries we are advising on areas including open access, infrastructure sharing, taxation, public-private partnerships, spectrum policy, Universal Service Funds (USFs), and effective ICT data collection and research.

Tailoring the approach in each country to local realities through a multi-stakeholder model of engagement.

Although A4AI has a broadly agreed-to and well-proven set of good practices, it recognises that each country is different and therefore, there can be no one-size-fits-all approach to increasing access to affordable Internet. In each [country of engagement](#), we build national multi-stakeholder coalitions, comprising representatives from civil society and the private and public sectors. These coalitions develop locally owned roadmaps and lead efforts to make Internet more affordable in their country.

WHAT HAS A4AI ACHIEVED TO DATE?

Since launching in October 2013, A4AI has:

- **Grown to become the world's broadest technology coalition.** The Alliance today boasts about 80 members, including technology industry giants, civil society heavyweights and world governments spanning five continents.
- **United our diverse member organisations around a set of policy and good practice recommendations.** This [document](#) guides our advocacy and on-the-ground work.
- **Secured formal commitments from six governments** (Nigeria, Ghana, Mozambique, Liberia, Dominican Republic, Myanmar) across three continents to work collaboratively toward implementing the policy and regulatory frameworks needed to create open, competitive markets and drive prices down for nearly 300 million citizens.
- **Successfully advocated for affordable Internet access to be included in the new UN Sustainable Development Goals.** As a result of advocacy efforts by A4AI and other like-minded organisations, [Goal 9](#) includes an aim "to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020".
- **Produced extensive original research to inform advocacy efforts and policymaking.** In addition to a number of country- and policy practice-specific [case studies](#), A4AI has released three editions of its annual [Affordability Report](#), which examine drivers of affordable Internet access across developing and emerging countries and lays out concrete policy recommendations for improving affordability. The Affordability Report has become a go-to resource for policymakers and advocacy organisations, and has led the ITU and other bodies to include income inequality data in measurements of Internet affordability.
- **Driven real progress on the ground.**
 - In **Ghana**, A4AI helped to secure a commitment by the government to reduce the country's import duty on smartphones by 10%. This is expected to lead to a growth in mobile broadband connections, which in turn could increase productivity and contribute to GDP growth.
 - In **Mozambique**, A4AI submitted detailed recommendations for a reduction in custom duties, expected to result in significant increases in tax revenue and an estimated



cumulative positive impact on GDP of US\$445 million by 2019. A4AI also helped to shape census questions on ICT use, which will lead to more accurate information on ICT access and usage in the country and will underpin more informed policymaking.

- o In the **Dominican Republic**, A4AI has revived and is supporting the development of the country's 2016-2020 Digital Agenda.
- o In **Liberia**, A4AI supported efforts to improve access to broadband connectivity in the post-Ebola context, and was recently invited to be a member of the ICT Policy Committee to support the development of the country's new ICT sector policy.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why launch A4AI? Over half the world’s population — equivalent to more than 4 billion people — remain unconnected to the Internet, entrenching a digital divide that severely hampers development and socio-economic progress. Most of those offline are women, and the majority live in the developing world. Affordability remains a key barrier to access: for the most part, those not connected to the Internet are not online because they cannot afford to be. For Norwegians, constant access to fast, uncapped broadband costs little more than the latte many buy every day on the way to the office; for Nigerians, just 500MB of mobile prepaid data can cost more than they spend on their children’s education.

By uniting diverse voices around a common goal and promoting sound, evidence-based policymaking, we believe A4AI’s coordinated approach offers the best chance for effecting the policy and regulatory changes needed to drive down costs and expand access.

What is A4AI? A4AI is a broad coalition working to drive down the cost of broadband access via policy and regulatory change, underpinned by research and knowledge sharing. The Alliance has a diverse, globally representative membership drawn from the public sector, private sector and civil society.

Why the focus on policy? Innovative technological solutions to affordability challenges are progressing apace. However, the best technologies in the world can’t drive change if monopolies or regressive policies prevent them from being implemented. Changes to policy can deliver impressive results, fast.

Who is involved? A4AI’s members include governments and government agencies, foundations, technology companies and service providers, academia and civil society organisations from both developed and less developed countries, with a strong presence from the Global South. Many of the world’s biggest ICT companies are members. The Alliance was initiated by the World Wide Web Foundation in October 2013, and the Foundation serves as the secretariat of the Alliance. For a list of current members see: <http://a4ai.org/members/>

What’s the goal? To drive down the cost of broadband and make affordable, universal access a reality. Specifically, A4AI is working to achieve a “1 for 2” target: 1GB of mobile broadband priced at 2% or less of average monthly income. At this level, many of the poor and other marginalised populations that continue to be priced out of the digital revolution should be able to afford a basic broadband connection. By doing so, we hope to enable billions of users to come online (with a particular focus on low-income countries) to work toward achieving the global goal (Sustainable Development Goal 9c) of universal, affordable access by 2020. We also advocate for policies designed to accelerate universal access, including public access programmes and community-owned networks.

Learn more about why the international community and countries around the world should be striving for this “1 for 2” target and pursuing public access solutions by reading our 2015-2016 Affordability Report.

How will you do this? Our work is centred around the belief that policy and regulatory reform are the best tools to unlock technological advances and reduce the cost to connect. A4AI and its broad membership work with national governments and with multi-stakeholder coalitions in our countries of engagement to determine the local policy solutions needed to drive down prices and enable more people to come online. With a clear focus on regulatory and policy matters, A4AI helps to identify and address barriers, build case studies around success stories, bring together key stakeholders, and promote regional cooperation.



A4AI's advocacy efforts and on-the-ground work are guided by our research and a set of policy and regulatory good practices that have been agreed to by all Alliance members. These practices operate on the understanding that open, competitive and innovative broadband markets are key to reducing connectivity costs for operators and for consumers. They also recognise that some populations will remain beyond the reach of the market, and so emphasise the need for public access initiatives (e.g., community WiFi, free or subsidised access in public schools and community centers) to bring access to women, the poor, and other marginalised populations that might still be unable to afford a broadband connection.

Does A4AI determine the policies and regulations that are implemented in countries of engagement? No. In our countries of engagement, A4AI plays an advisory and convening role. We work with the wide range of stakeholders that participate in the national coalitions to determine what the most successful policy solutions might be to drive down costs, and provide support as requested for local advocacy efforts.

Who funds A4AI? We are funded by our members, who also provide practical support.

What is the relationship between A4AI, Facebook Free Basics, Google Loon, and other programmes designed to increase Internet access in developing countries? While A4AI and these other initiatives share a common goal of enabling Internet access for more people around the world, our approaches to doing so differ. Many of these other programmes look to employ technical innovations and new business models to drive down the cost of data; A4AI has a clear focus on working to ensure the policy and regulatory frameworks in place contribute to lower costs and enable open access for all.

Who runs A4AI? The Alliance is an initiative of the World Wide Web Foundation (established by Web inventor Sir Tim Berners-Lee). The Foundation serves as the Secretariat for the Alliance. Major decisions are made in conjunction with our Advisory Council. This is an elected 12-member, non-fiduciary board that provides oversight, strategic direction and high-level decision making for the Alliance.

Where is A4AI based? Our head office is in Washington DC, USA. We also have hubs in Cape Town, South Africa and London, UK, and regional coordinators based in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

How can I help? If you're an organisation, you can consider joining us. Click here to read about becoming a member of A4AI. If you're an individual, we need your help to spread the word. Please follow us on Twitter, like us on Facebook and tell as many people as possible about us! Please also keep an eye on our jobs page and consider joining the team.

Want more information? For inquiries regarding membership, please contact Karolle Rabarison, A4AI Membership Coordinator (karolle.rabarison@webfoundation.org). For all communications-related inquiries, please contact Lauran Potter, A4AI Communications Manager (lauran.potter@webfoundation.org).