



REPORT | MARCH 8, 2017

# Women Hosts and Airbnb: Building a Global Community

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# Introduction

In 1970, Danish economist Ester Boserup published “Women’s Role in Economic Development,” which argued that the role of women in economic development has been underestimated, underappreciated, and underinvested for centuries. Boserup’s work led to the UN International Year for Women in 1975 and presaged a significant advancement of the role women play in the global economy.<sup>1</sup> Despite major progress in the decades since, many obstacles to equal opportunity for women still remain.

In some areas, progress still has far to go. Women continue to earn less than men (60 to 75 percent of men’s wages in many nations) while, in the words of the World Bank, bearing “disproportionate responsibility for housework and care.”<sup>2</sup> In other areas, progress that has been made is tenuous and in danger of stalling out and reversing. In the US, new data from Pew Research Center show that while the percentage of women in the workforce has risen dramatically in recent decades, the growth is expected to stagnate and reverse over the next 40 years.<sup>3</sup>

The massive changes sweeping across the world’s largest industries also threaten to further complicate the prospect of economic equality for women. A recent memo from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) notes, “The world of work is undergoing rapid transformations driven by unprecedented technological shifts... The impact of these changes on women is varied and gives rise to both opportunities and risks.”

Among risk factors, UN Women notes that as technology propels greater automation across industries, “women are more likely than men to be employed in occupations at high risk of automation. Similarly, women, workers with less education and workers in lower-wage occupations are more likely to be impacted by automation and consequent job losses.” According to the World Economic Forum, the job sectors that are projected to grow the most by 2020 (including computer/mathematical, architecture/engineering, and management) have low rates of women participation, while sectors expected to decline have high rates of women participation.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, UN Women points to the “gig” or sharing economy as one transformation that could have potential positive impact for women. Airbnb is a pioneer in the sharing economy and, in

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<sup>1</sup> Lorraine Corner; Women’s Role in Economic Development. *Eur Rev Agric Econ* 2008; 35 (4): 598-601. doi: 10.1093/erae/jbn037. Accessed February 17, 2017, at

<https://academic.oup.com/erae/article-abstract/35/4/598/513051/Women-s-Role-in-Economic-Development?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

<sup>2</sup> World Development Report (2012). Chapter 2: the Persistence of Gender Inequality. Page 80. Accessed January 3, 2017, at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1315936222006/chapter-2.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Fry and Renee Stepler (2017). “Women may never make up half of the U.S. workforce.” Pew Research Center. Accessed February 3, 2016, at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/31/women-may-never-make-up-half-of-the-u-s-workforce/>

<sup>4</sup> Jacqueline Simmons and Jeff Green (2017). “The Rise of Robots Will Make the Tech Gender Gap Even Worse.” Bloomberg Technology. Accessed February 14, 2017, at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-01-23/rise-of-powerful-women-at-davos-belies-coming-job-destruction>

fact, has long been powered by a worldwide community of women hosts. And, of course, the work of person-to-person hospitality on Airbnb is one that cannot be automated.

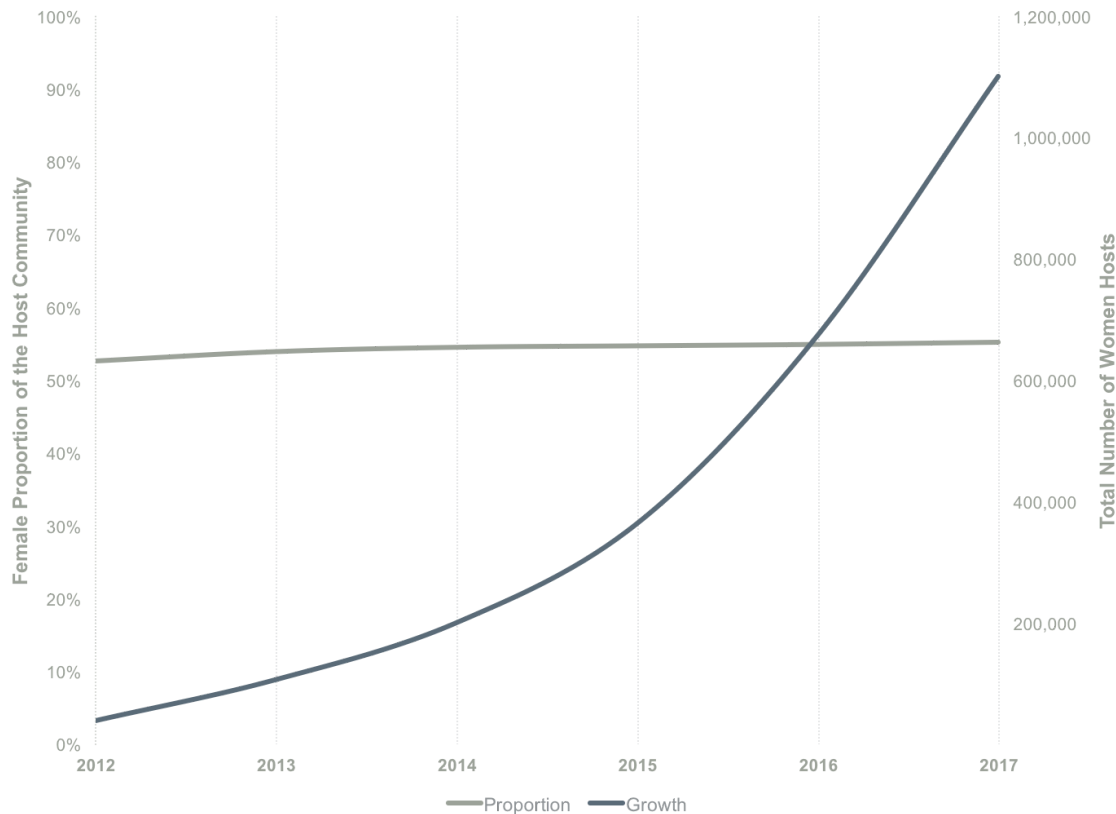
Hosting on Airbnb is not a panacea for the myriad obstacles to greater empowerment that women face worldwide. But through platforms like Airbnb, women around the world are finding a new source of supplemental income and a new opportunity for economic security and independence. As Airbnb’s first dedicated study of women hosts, this report examines how women have developed into a growing force in the Airbnb community, how women hosts engage with Airbnb, and how Airbnb can provide women hosts with the means for greater financial, professional, and social empowerment.

**The Airbnb community is powered by women around the world.**

An estimated more than 1 million women host on Airbnb, making up 55 percent of the global Airbnb host community. While women participate in the general workforce at 68 percent of the rate that men participate, women host on Airbnb at 120 percent of the rate of men.

In fact, Airbnb has always been powered by a strong community of women hosts. Throughout Airbnb’s history, women have consistently made up the majority of our global host community.

**FIGURE 1: Global Growth of Women Host Community Since 2012**



Our community of women hosts has tracked with our rapid growth.

As the driving force behind Airbnb's global community, women hosts are also seeing significant financial, professional, and social impact from their hosting. Since Airbnb's founding in 2008, women hosts on Airbnb have earned more than \$10 billion in income. In 2016, more than 200,000 women hosts worldwide each earned at least \$5,000 USD (or the equivalent in their home currency) from hosting on Airbnb.

In the pages that follow, we use data and personal stories to examine why women are choosing to participate in hosting through Airbnb, and we explore the ways in which Airbnb can provide women with the financial, professional, and social tools for greater self-sufficiency. Airbnb is a global community that spans more than 190 countries, and the travel industry is particularly impactful to the world economy, accounting for nearly 10 percent of global gross domestic product and 1 in every 11 jobs.<sup>5</sup> This report includes both global data, as well as data that focuses specifically on the Airbnb community across a diverse subset of countries: Argentina, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, South Africa, Spain, the UK, and the US.

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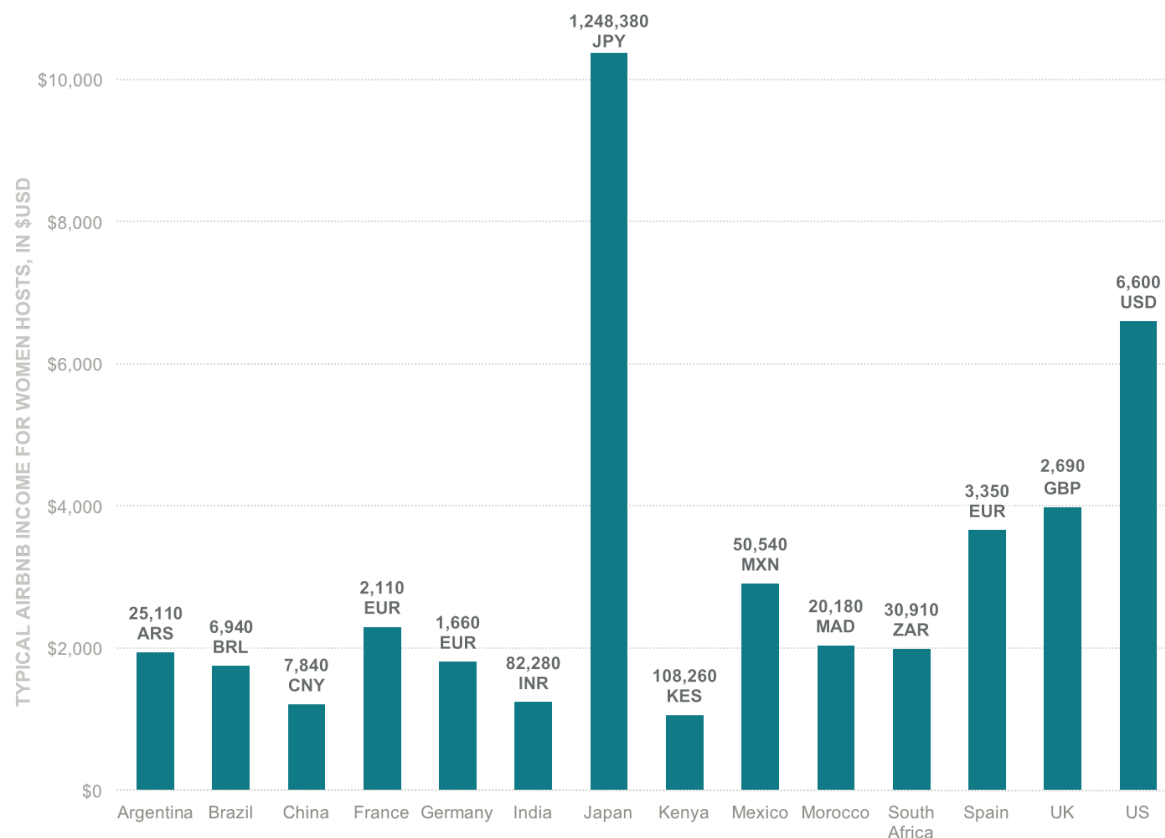
<sup>5</sup> World Travel & Tourism Council (2016). "Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2016 Annual Update Summary." Accessed February 14, 2017, at [https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/2016-documents/economic-impact-summary-2016\\_a4-web.pdf](https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/2016-documents/economic-impact-summary-2016_a4-web.pdf).

## Economic Opportunity

Financial empowerment for women has far-reaching effects. As the World Bank recently noted, increasing the share of household income controlled by women boosts spending in ways that benefit children, strengthening economic growth and intergenerational mobility.<sup>6</sup>

Hosting on platforms like Airbnb is a powerful tool to empower women in countries around the world. Women hosts can earn significant income through hosting on Airbnb.

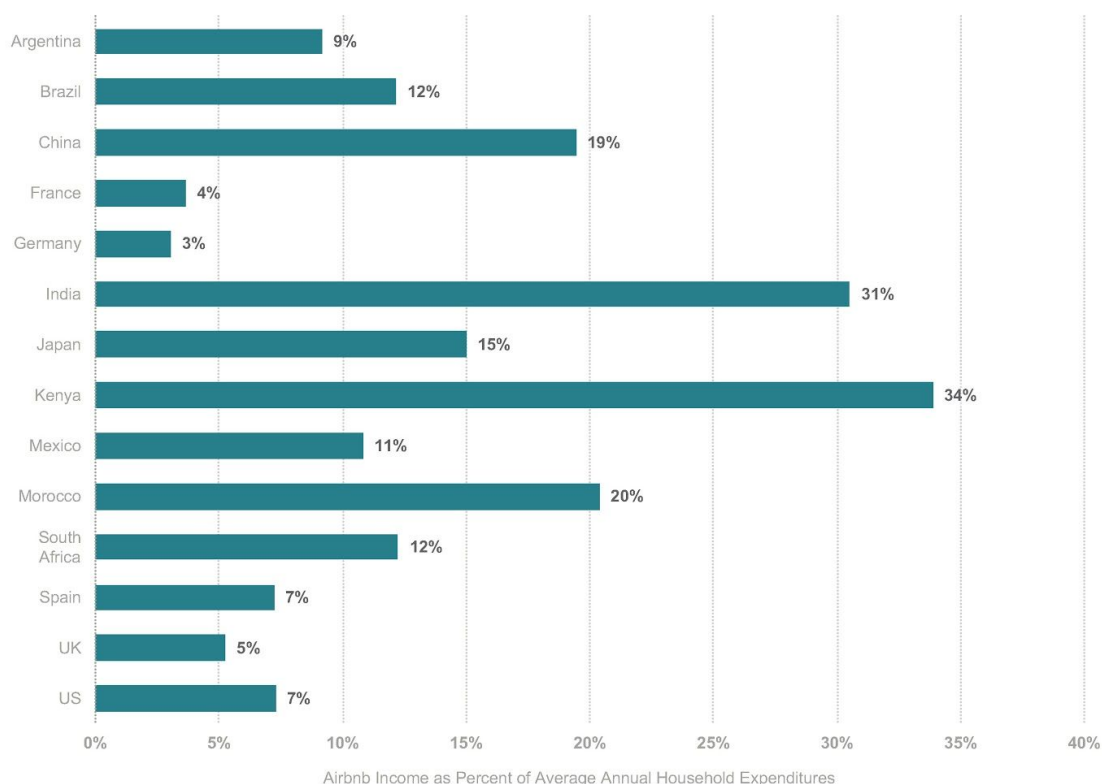
FIGURE 2: Typical Annual Income for Women Airbnb Hosts in 2016



This income can also be especially meaningful when controlled for purchasing power or compared to typical household cost of living in the communities where women are hosting. Typical Airbnb income for women hosts in some countries can represent a significant percentage of annual household expenditures.

<sup>6</sup> World Development Report (2012).

**FIGURE 3: Comparing Typical Airbnb Income for Women Hosts to Average Annual Household Expenditures**



*Notes: Annual household expenditures is household consumption in constant 2005 USD, which is a measure of what households spent to purchase goods and services over a year. Annual household expenditure data is taken from the Canback Global Income Distribution Database, accessed at <https://cgidd.com/national-Selection.aspx> on February 6, 2017.*

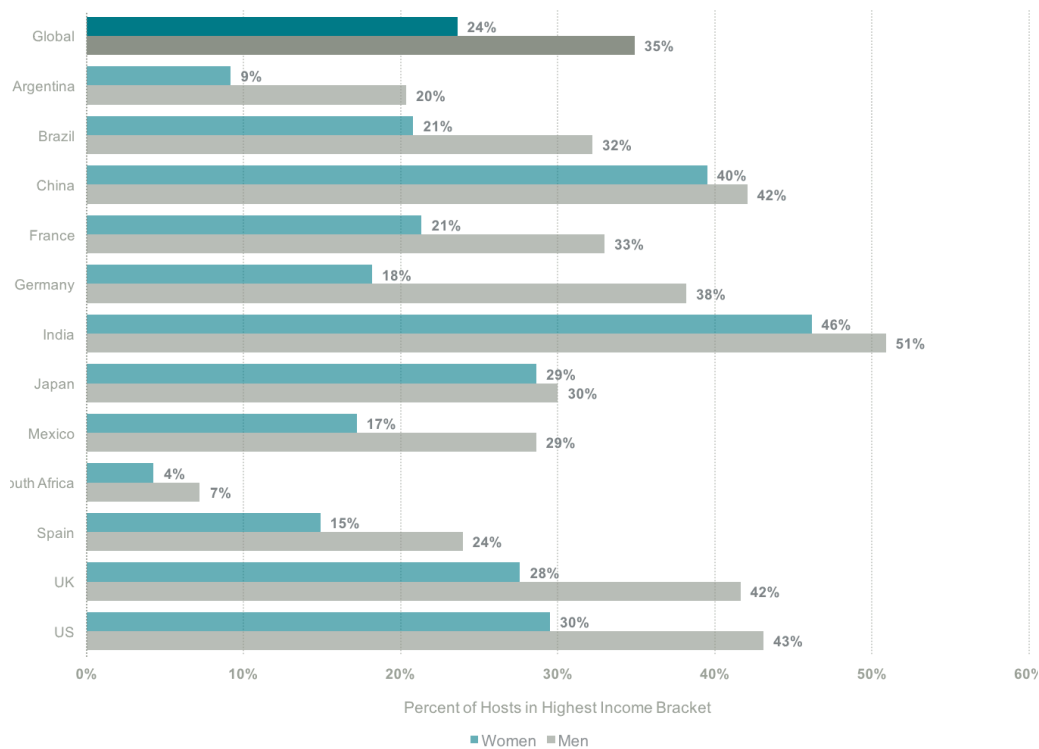
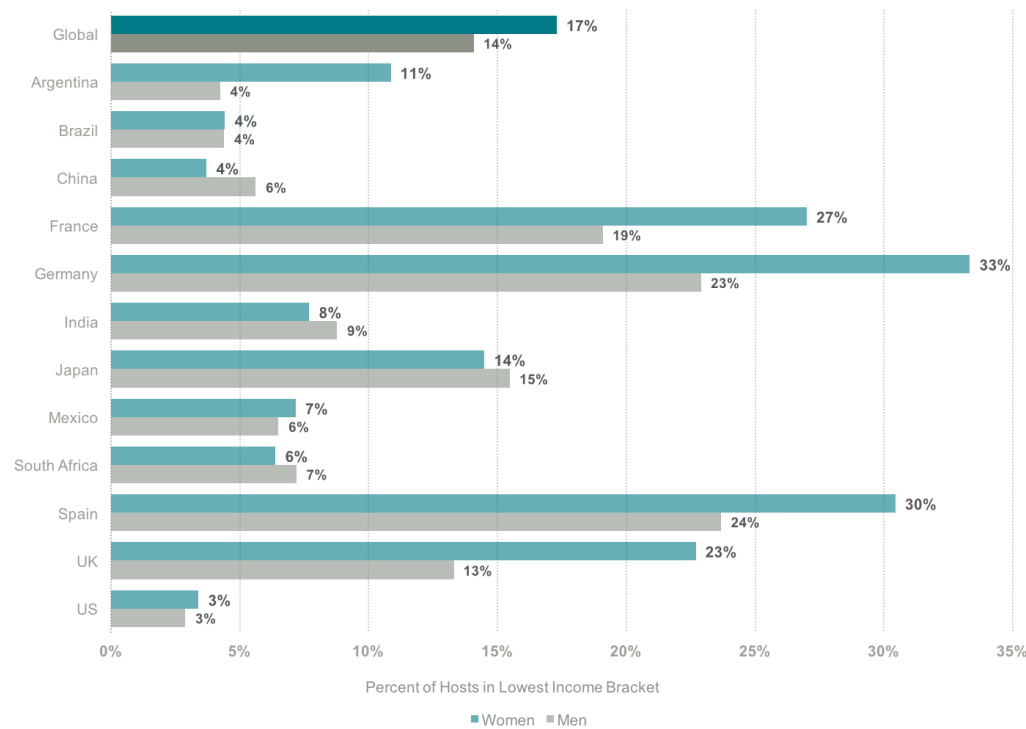
Hosting is not a blanket solution to global problems of economic inequality, but it can provide an important, independent stream of income for women hosts.

### **The Gender Pay Equity Gap and Airbnb**

Globally, women earn less than men at an average of 60 to 75 cents per dollar of men's income, as per UN Women. Across most countries, the lowest income brackets are made up of a disproportionately high number of women, while the highest income brackets are made up of a disproportionately high number of men.

This imbalance is also reported by the Airbnb host community for their income earned outside of hosting: a higher percentage of women hosts report to us that their non-hosting income falls in the lowest bracket, while a higher percentage of men hosts report to us that their income (for money earned outside of Airbnb) falls in the highest bracket.

**FIGURE 4: (Non-Airbnb) Income Demographics by Host Gender**

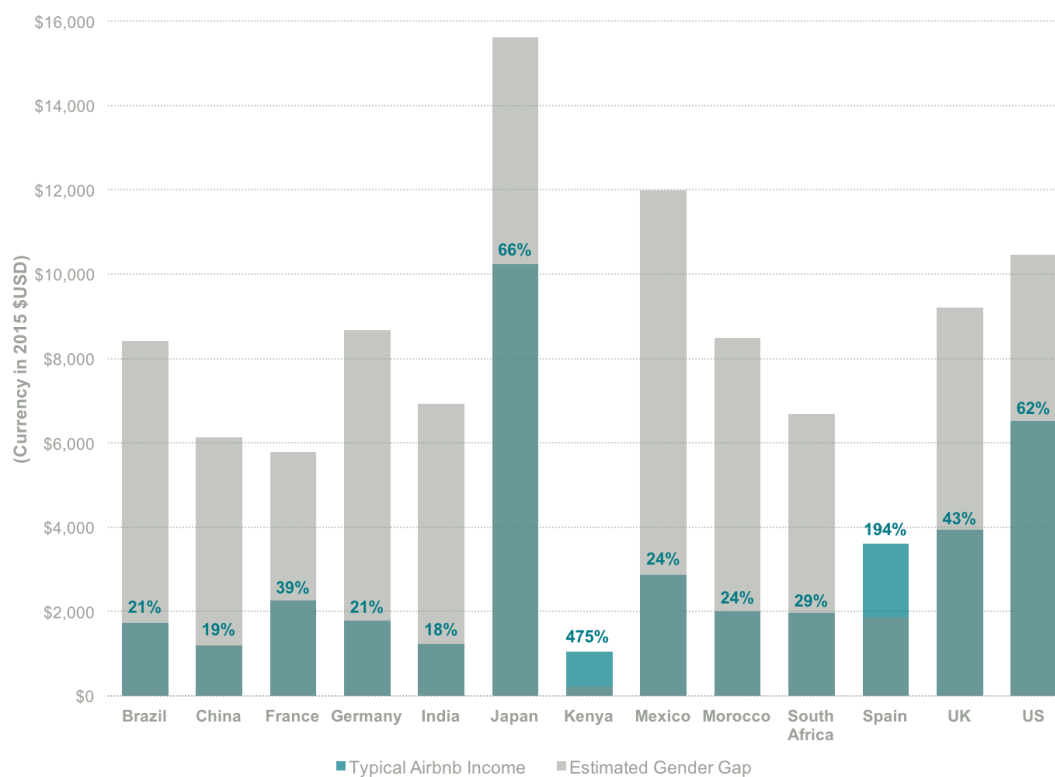


**Notes:** Figure 4 relies on a 2016 email survey of 12,000 hosts who hosted guests in calendar year 2015. Information is not available for Kenya and Morocco. Appendix A includes more information defining the highest and lowest income brackets for each country.

Studies show that even when other factors are held equal—education levels, occupation, hours worked, location, and more—women are still paid less than men for similar work. An International Labour Organization (ILO) report from 2016 finds that in Europe, women are paid about 20 percent less than men, similar to the gap in the US.<sup>7</sup> In Mexico, Brazil, and China, the gender pay gap is between 20 and 25 percent; in Argentina, about 27 percent. While there has been some progress on closing the gap in recent years, the ILO recently projected that gender parity in global wages would not be achieved until 2086.<sup>8</sup>

In many countries, the typical Airbnb annual income for a woman host is significant enough to help make up some of the gender wage gap that exists.

**FIGURE 5: Typical Airbnb Income for Women Hosts Relative to the Gender Income Gap**



**Notes:** Data not available for Argentina. For Germany, Spain, France, UK, and US, the gender income gap is estimated based on gross average annual wages (in 2015 \$USD) and the estimated wage gap percentage. For Brazil, China, India, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, Mexico and South Africa, the gender income gap is estimated as the difference between earned income estimates for men and women (in 2015 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) \$USD). Typical 2016 Airbnb income for women hosts deflated to 2015 \$USD for comparison's sake. Average annual wages and the estimated gender income gaps are taken from <http://www.movehub.com/blog/global-gender-pay-gap-map>, <http://w3.unece.org>, and <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2015/economies/#economy=FRA>.

<sup>7</sup> International Labour Organization (2016). "Large gender gaps remain across broad spectrum of global labour market." Accessed February 14, 2017, at [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_457267/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_457267/lang-en/index.htm).

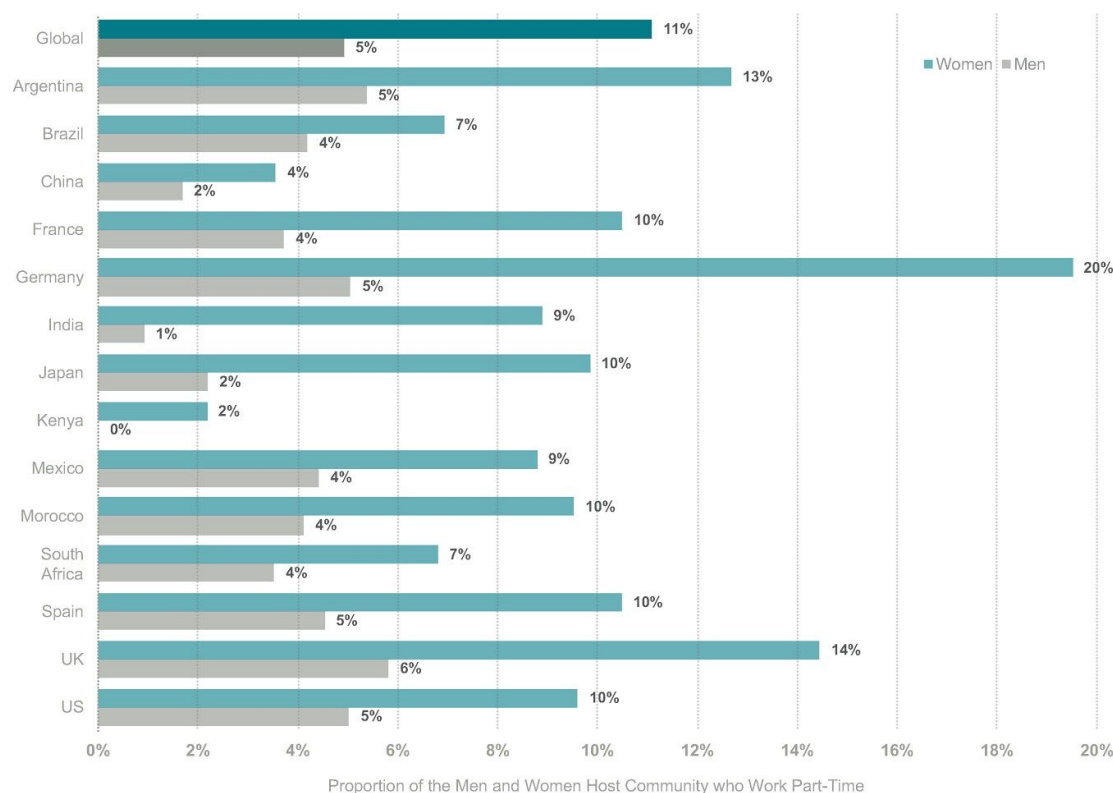
<sup>8</sup> International Labour Organization (2014). "Women and the Future of Work." Accessed February 14, 2017, at [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_348087.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_348087.pdf).



One cause of the gender gap in wages is the discrepancy between men and women who work part-time. Globally, women are more likely than men to work part-time. This is due to a variety of factors: women are more likely to work in the informal sector; women bear disproportionate responsibility for unpaid child care or elder care; and traditional conceptions around women's roles as economic dependents, rather than economic producers, can make it more difficult for women to enter the workforce full-time.

The Airbnb community mirrors this discrepancy, with a higher percentage of women hosts reporting they are employed part-time than men hosts.

**FIGURE 6: Proportion of Part-Time Workers By Gender Within Airbnb Host Community**



**Notes:** Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Length of bars may vary, due to rounding.

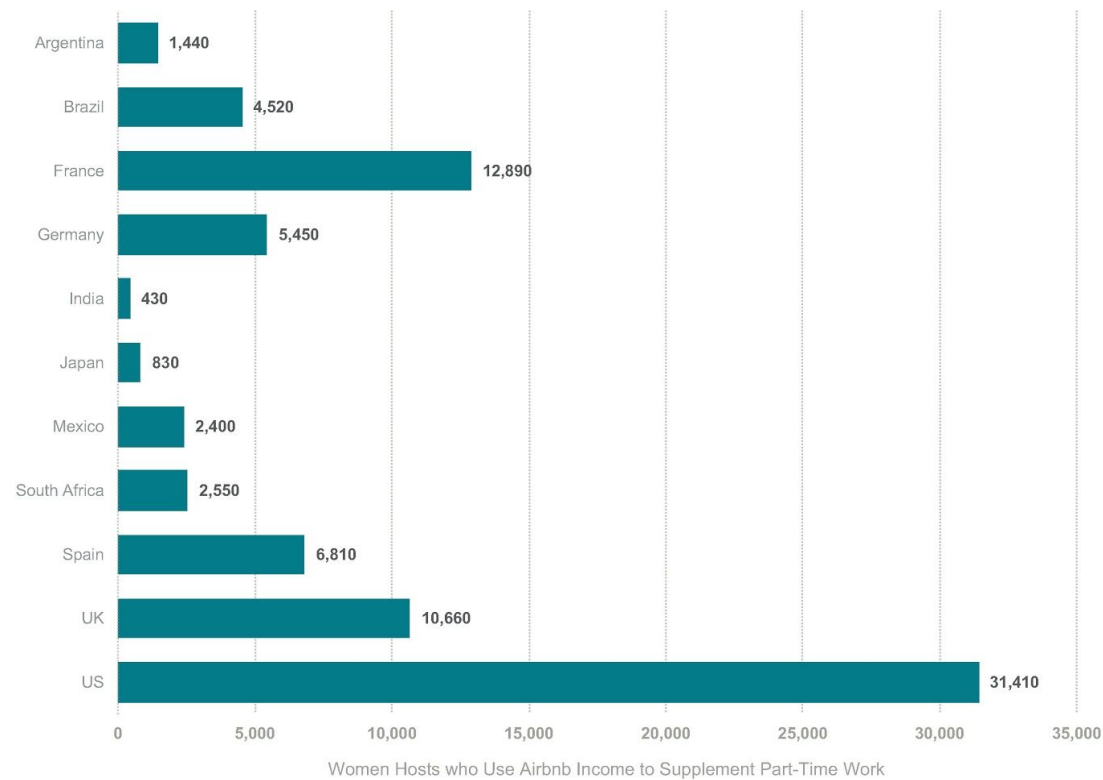
Across all the countries studied, the number of women hosts who report they work part-time is almost double or more the number of men hosts.

For women who work part-time, home sharing through Airbnb can help generate important supplemental income. Harvard economist studies have shown that greater flexibility in the time and place that work gets done would go a long way in helping to close the gender wage gap, especially because women have a disproportionate share of responsibility for caregiving.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Claire Cain Miller (2017). "How to Close a Gender Gap: Let Employees Control Their Schedules." Accessed February 10, 2017, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/07/upshot/how-to-close-a-gender-gap-let-employees-control-their-schedules.html>

Many women hosts report that they host on Airbnb to support themselves while they work part-time. Globally, we estimate that over 150,000 women use Airbnb income to supplement part-time wages.

**FIGURE 7: Estimate of Women Hosts Who Use Airbnb Income to Support Themselves While Working Part-Time**



**Notes:** Figure 7 relies on a 2016 email survey of 12,000 hosts who hosted guests in calendar year 2015. Information is not available for China, Kenya and Morocco.

## **Airbnb Women Hosts Investing in their Families**

In addition to using their income to support themselves while working part-time, many women Airbnb hosts also report that they use their Airbnb income for the important purposes of investing in their homes and families. Around the world, women hosts are using their Airbnb income to cover household expenses, afford their homes, and make ends meet.

Research indicates that concentrating greater income or assets in the hands of women is associated with larger improvements in child health and larger expenditure shares of household nutrients, health and housing.<sup>10</sup> In turn, these expenditures lead to greater economic opportunity for themselves and their children.

Globally, women Airbnb hosts report that they use one-quarter of their Airbnb income to pay for regular household expenses like bills and groceries.

# 23%

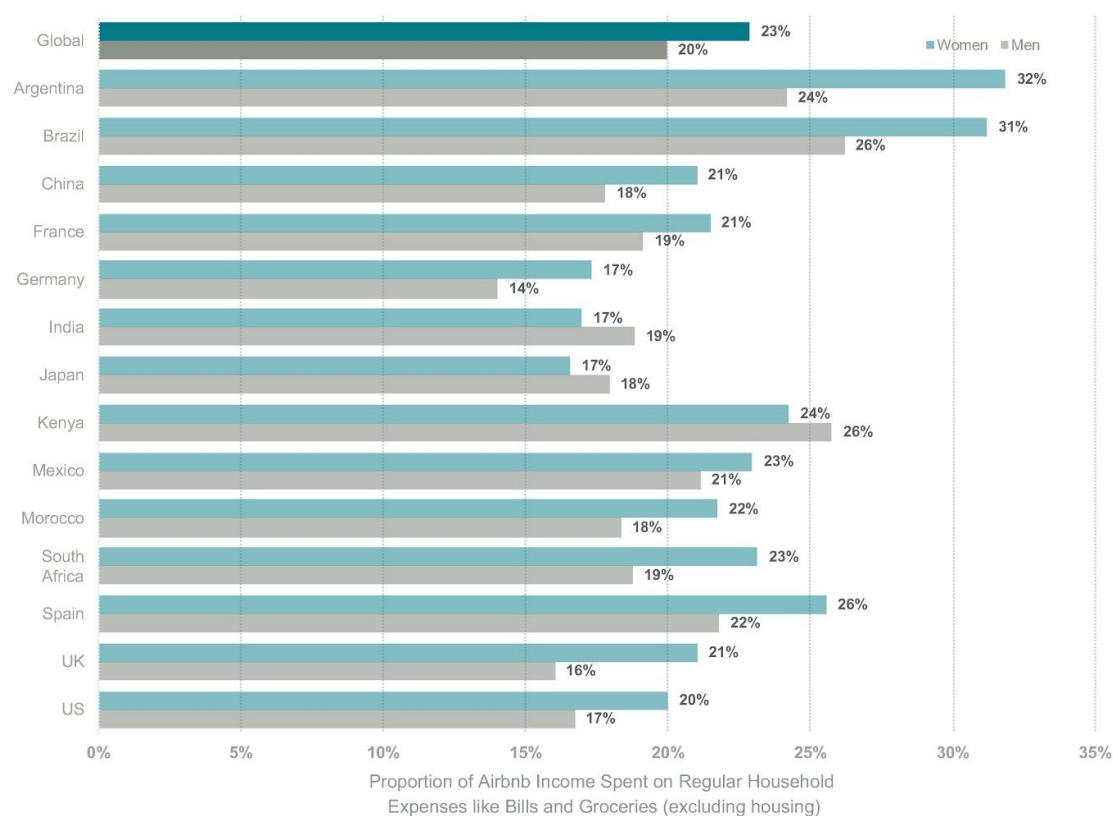
**Average portion of Airbnb  
income that women hosts spend  
on regular household expenses  
like bills and groceries**

And across the majority of countries studied, women hosts report dedicating a higher percentage of their Airbnb income to regular household expenses than men do.

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas, Duncan (1993). "The Distribution of Income and Expenditure within the Household." *Annales d'Economie et de Statistique* 29: 109–35.

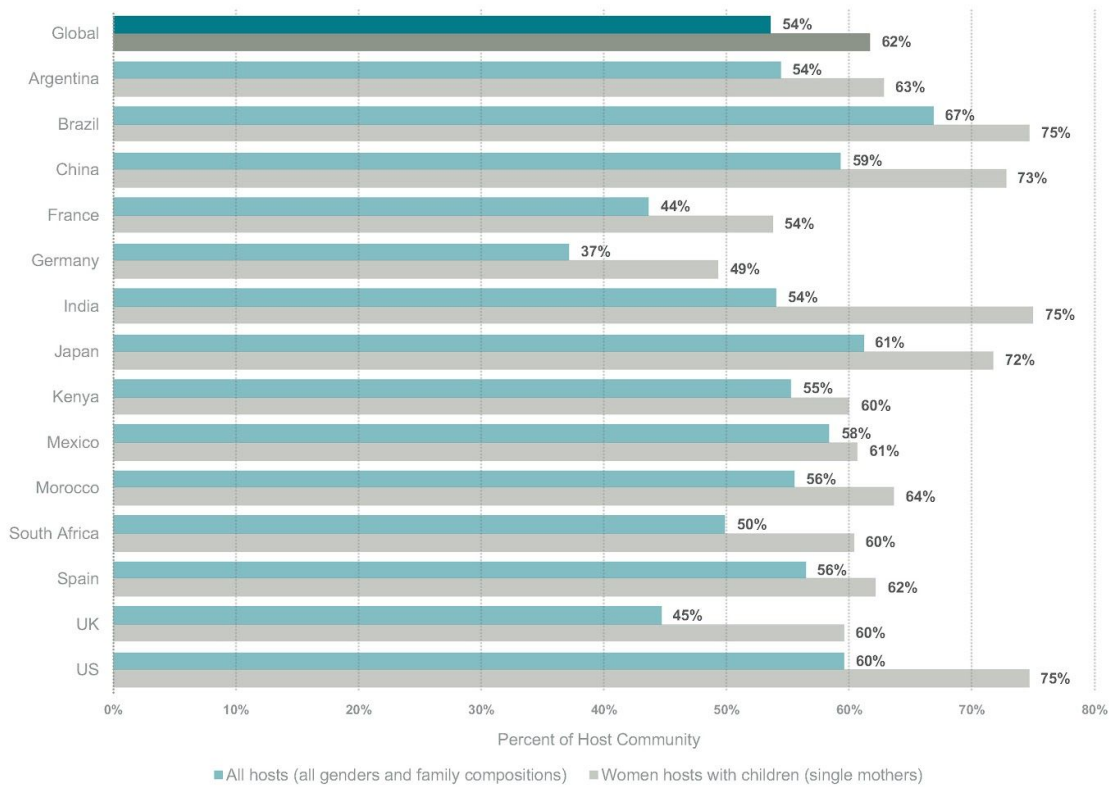
**FIGURE 8: Percentage of Airbnb Income Spent on Regular Household Expenses (Excluding Housing)**



**Notes:** Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Length of bars may vary, due to rounding.

In addition to household expenses, many hosts rely on Airbnb to afford their own homes. Over half of hosts across the global Airbnb community report they use their hosting income to help afford their home. And more women hosts than men hosts report that they use their Airbnb income to help afford their home, especially single mothers.

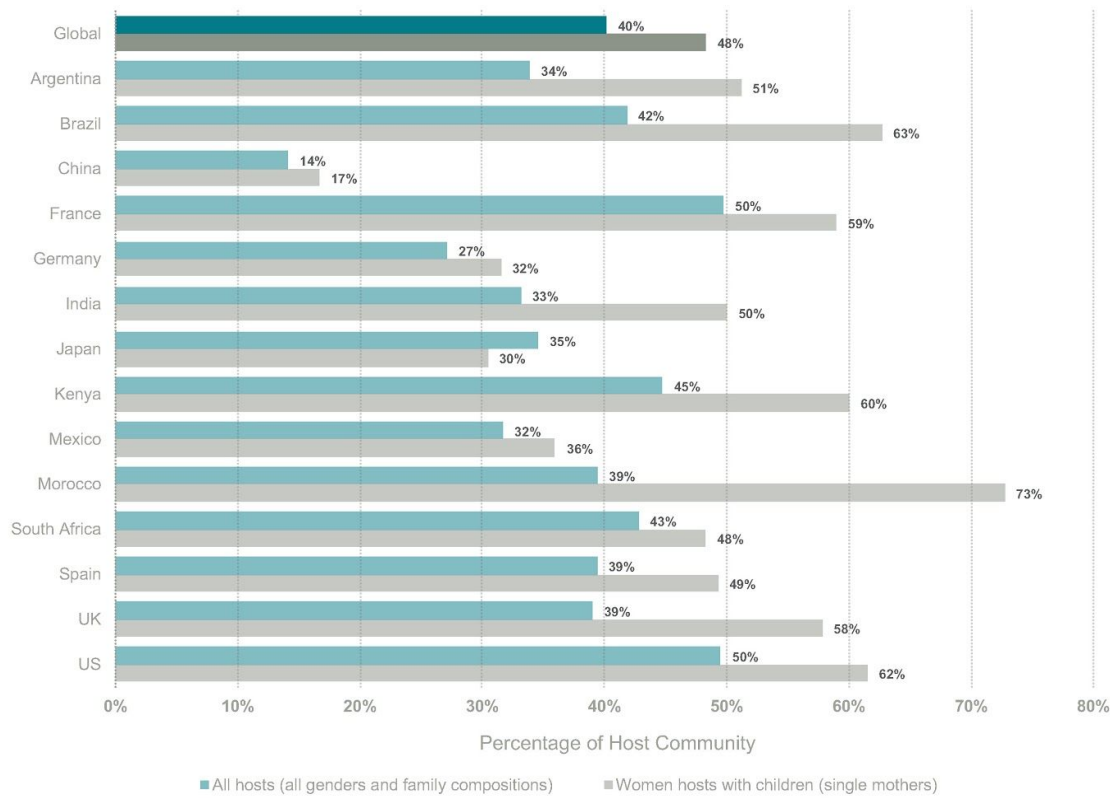
**FIGURE 9: Percentage of Hosts Who Report Using Their Airbnb Income to Help Afford Their Home by Household Composition**



**Notes:** Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Length of bars may vary, due to rounding.

Beyond housing and household expenses, many hosts worldwide report that they rely on their Airbnb income to make ends meet, including a significant portion of women hosts. More women hosts than men hosts report that they depend on home sharing income to make ends meet, including a significant percentage of single mothers.

**FIGURE 10: Percentage of Hosts Who Report Using Their Airbnb Income to Make Ends Meet**



**Notes:** Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Length of bars may vary, due to rounding.

## Kasumi in Kumamoto, Japan



Kasumi is a single mother of four living in Kumamoto, Japan. She has a 21-year-old, a 20-year-old, an 18-year-old and a mentally challenged 15-year-old. Becoming an Airbnb host was a turning point in her life.

Though her eldest son is now helping to support the family, Kasumi says it has been extremely hard to raise four kids by herself. She did not receive any

child care payments or financial support from her ex-husband. She has had to work from early morning to late night to pay for living expenses, educational costs, and the house mortgage. With her schedule, she was only able to spend time or have dinner with her children very late at night.

Kasumi started hosting on Airbnb to help with these financial realities.

A group of guests booked her listing right after she registered as a host. Her house is built with a traditional architectural style, which she imagines is one of the reasons why guests love to stay with her.

Her youngest son, despite his mental challenges, loves to communicate with guests and stays active by helping her host. Kasumi says that hosting has seemed to make him more easygoing and confident in himself.

Income from Airbnb hosting helps not only support her family's living expenses, but also allows her to spend quality time with her family. After about eight months of hosting, Kasumi was able to reduce her work hours to spend more time with her family.

# Professional Empowerment

Many women face professional obstacles that go beyond the gender pay gap. According to UNICEF, women often have less access to education than men, which can initiate an early professional disadvantage. Women also frequently face barriers to entry in particular occupations, especially ones that have historically been considered “men’s work” (World Bank Group 2016), while also facing structural barriers to entry in the general workforce, such as greater responsibility for child care (UN Women).

Of course, hosting alone cannot overcome every structural barrier to equal professional opportunity. But Airbnb can help women achieve professional empowerment by creating opportunities for women to own and operate businesses as microentrepreneurs.

Many women hosts use their Airbnb income to support themselves while launching a business, or as investment capital for a new business they’re starting. Unlike some paths to achieving independent income, there are no high barriers to entry for becoming an Airbnb host: women hosts are able to quickly set up a listing and begin earning money. And data suggests that women hosts on Airbnb are more likely than men to take advantage of opportunities to further develop their hosting skills, building expertise that makes their hosting enterprises even more successful and sustainable.

## Airbnb Income Supports Women Entrepreneurs

Self-employment can be an effective path for women to achieve professional empowerment. Whether starting their own full-time hospitality business, providing critical funding for a new venture, or supporting an existing freelance business, women around the world are seizing the opportunity of home sharing to take greater control of their economic future.

One of the biggest obstacles that women entrepreneurs face around the world is lack of access to capital to start and grow their businesses. The World Bank Group’s International Finance Corporation (IFC) estimates that as many as 70 percent of women-owned small and medium enterprises in developing countries are unserved or underserved by financial institutions—resulting in a credit gap of around \$285 billion USD.<sup>11</sup>

Across the countries studied, a significant number of women hosts are using their Airbnb income to support themselves while launching a business, or as direct investment capital for a new business. In some other countries (including ones outside of this particular study) like Cuba, South Africa, Indonesia, and Thailand, women Airbnb hosts who identify themselves as either self-employed or entrepreneurs outnumber those in other professions. Based on our

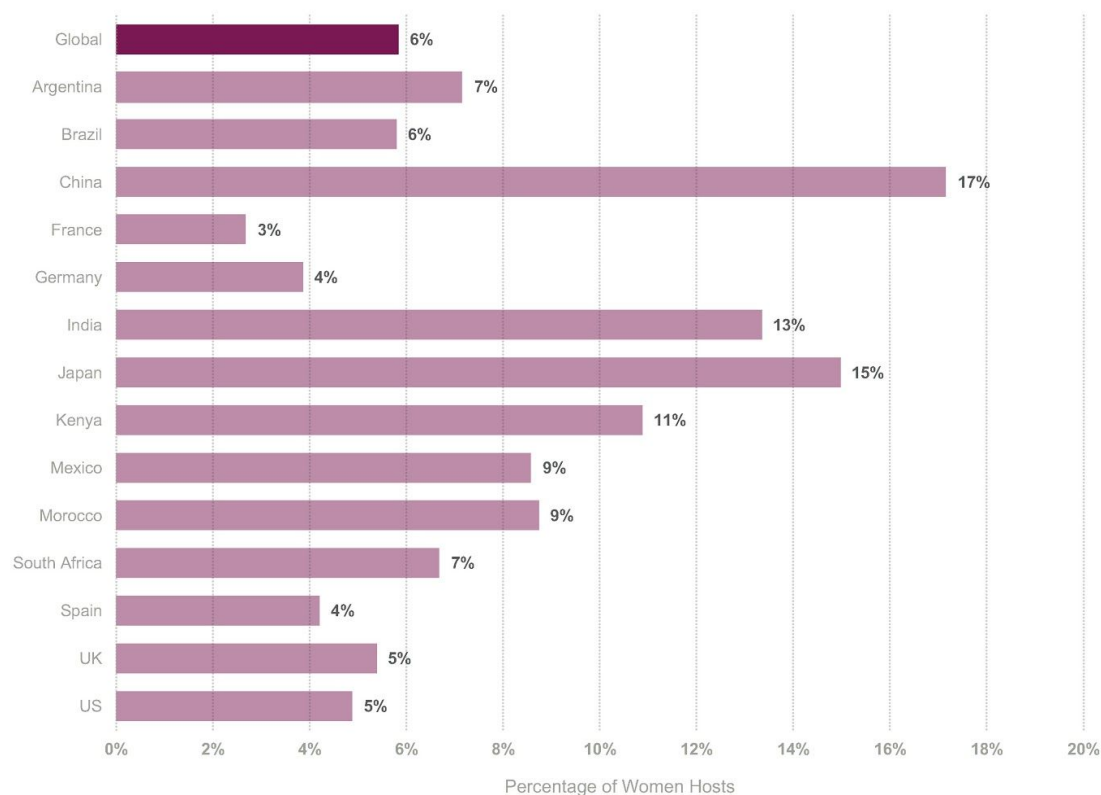
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<sup>11</sup> World Bank Group (2015). “In Ethiopia, Female Entrepreneurs Get a Chance to Pursue Their Dreams.” Accessed January 5, 2017, at <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/11/16/in-ethiopia-female-entrepreneurs-get-a-chance-to-pursue-their-dreams>



research to date, we estimate that more than 50,000 women around the world have used Airbnb income to support entrepreneurship for themselves.

**FIGURE 11: Percentage of Women Hosts Who Say They Use Their Airbnb Income to Support a New Business**



**Notes:** Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Length of bars may vary, due to rounding.

Of course, entrepreneurial hosts may use Airbnb income for any combination of expenses: subsidizing freelance work to build clientele, supplementing their incomes while launching a business, and/or financing start-up costs of a new business.

As the data above makes clear, women around the world are using Airbnb to secure the freedom to pursue new career opportunities with less financial uncertainty. Greater and more independent financial stability helps women hosts follow their entrepreneurial dreams, creating new businesses and pursuing personal projects.

## Supporting Female Entrepreneurs through the Vital Voices GROW program

There are an estimated 12 million women-owned small and medium businesses around the world, 7 million of which are located in developing countries. These businesses and the women who lead them have the potential to be a powerful force for building prosperity through GDP growth and job creation. While the potential for economic contributions are significant, women business owners face challenges in accessing the support services they need to grow, such as access to networks, training, financing and markets.

To support female entrepreneurs, Vital Voices created the VV GROW Fellowship, the only accelerator of its kind to partner with women business leaders to address their key obstacles to growth and to enhance their leadership impact. Attending trade fairs and other international market-access events can be great opportunities to grow a business, but the costs of transportation, accommodation and fees can create significant barriers for entrepreneurs. To tackle this common challenge, Vital Voices and Airbnb partnered in 2016 to provide travel credits to cover accommodation costs for Vital Voices GROW fellows who travel for market access opportunities, networking and professional development opportunities.

For fellow Josefina Urzaiz, the founder of Hammock Boutique, which creates handwoven products made by artisans across Mexico, accessing the travel credits provided by this partnership enabled her to participate in the Spoga Gafa trade fair in Germany. Josefina shared that “The Airbnb email from Vital Voices came at the right time, when we were trying to decide if we could afford our participation in 2016.” At Spoga Gafa, Josefina was able to establish contact with over 30 potential buyers in Europe, as well as generate approximately \$40,000 in new orders for Hammock Boutique. As she reflects on the impact of the new business for her community, she believes that “Growing our sales coincides with increasing our productivity, hiring new employees and expanding our network of Mayan weavers in the Yucatan.”

Every fellow in the program also commits to sharing their knowledge, skills and expertise with others, increasing the influence of women role models in their businesses and communities.

# Nathalia Watanabe in São Paulo, Brazil: Business & Entrepreneur Support

*Host testimonial lightly edited for length.*



“I discovered Airbnb in 2010, while I was in architecture school. I loved the platform and how it allowed me to visit so many homes around the world, to see how people lived and how their spaces reflected themselves. It was just incredible to me, as someone who is so passionate about the subject.

In 2013, I traveled as an Airbnb guest to Italy. While on the trip, I fell in love and ended up living in Italy for the

following two years. I became an Airbnb host to support myself during that time.

But it wasn't until I got back to my hometown of São Paulo, Brazil, in 2016 that I would be able to see how Airbnb could truly help me reach my dreams. I decided to co-found a startup called Woole, an app that cyclists can use to choose the best and safest route to take. It was—and still is—the most exciting project of my life! However, starting a company meant absolutely no income for months. I found the solution in hosting.

I put everything I had learned from hosting in Italy into action and started renting spare bedrooms in my house. That allowed me to not only pay for my home, but also to sustain myself and my new business. Now, I have hosted more than 90 guests from all over the world and made many new friends, and my startup is moving forward! It truly has been an amazing ride, and I am sure a lot more is still to come.

Airbnb helped me become a host, and being a host has allowed me to fulfill my personal goals and entrepreneurial dreams. When I opened my home, I also opened myself to all the possibilities that home sharing could offer me.”

## **Airbnb Presents Low Barriers to Entry for an Independent Income Stream**

Women face high barriers to entry in particular occupations, especially as major technological forces dramatically reshape the global labor market. The 2017 World Economic Forum<sup>12</sup> noted that three sectors with the highest growth areas—management, computer and math, and architecture and engineering—have “low female participation with little expectations of significant increases.” And the WEF noted that “the rise of automation and artificial intelligence...is projected to be far more destructive globally to jobs currently favored by women than to jobs favored by men.”

Against this backdrop, more than 1 million women worldwide have signed up to become Airbnb hosts. When they sign up, the barriers to entry are low and they can quickly and easily begin earning income.

**71%**

Women who activate a listing who ultimately do end up hosting a guest

**3 weeks**

Average time between a woman host activating her listing and receiving her first booking request

**3.6**

Average number of booking requests per 30 days on the Airbnb platform

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<sup>12</sup> Jacqueline Simmons and Jeff Green (2017).

# Gauri Ben and the Self-Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA)

*Host testimonial lightly edited for length.*



"I joined the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) at 23 years old. At the time, there was a water shortage in my home village, and young people would travel 100km to fetch water for our families. The standard of living was very poor.

We worked as craftswomen in sewing, beadwork, and aari work, but never knew that we could earn rupees for our crafts. SEWA introduced me to the idea of making a living by selling the crafts we had already been producing. The skill to market our work and our stories has helped us develop increased financial independence and empowerment.

Not everyone has been supportive of this. Women who venture out of the area to sell their crafts have received resistance from others in the village. Our community even implemented a 10,000 rupee fine for whoever went out of the village. However, we refused to let this limit our ability to work and look for more livelihood opportunities.

I first learned about Airbnb during a SEWA meeting in Ahmedabad six months ago. I looked at the opportunity multiple times and saw some of the homes my fellow SEWA sisters were planning to list on Airbnb. They said Airbnb would provide training to help us share our homes to global travelers. On having a third look, I decided that I would also put my house on Airbnb. Airbnb and SEWA will organize training on hosting standards and on how to market our homes and communities on the platform.

We need help on the technical side of the platform to market our homes and communities to travelers. My children are tech savvy. They use WhatsApp, Facebook, and email. I want to build more technology skills to help attract more visitors to our village who will then know how we live, what we eat, and what our traditions are. The technical skills to promote my home as a destination will allow me to share my story to an external audience. Most importantly, we'll be able to promote our craftwork right from our own homes through the Airbnb platform. These combined hospitality and technical skills will allow a new market will open up for SEWA women."

## **Women Hosts Succeed on Airbnb**

Data suggest that women hosts are more likely than men hosts to take advantage of opportunities to further develop their hosting skills, building their enterprise to potentially earn even more independent income through home sharing.

Since 2013, Airbnb has offered a wide variety of classes, workshops, webinars, and more to engage with hosts and help them make the most of their listing. The epicenter for this activity is the annual Airbnb Open, a multiday conference attended by thousands of hosts around the world.

Women hosts are more likely to attend the Open, and they're also more likely to lead and participate in the workshops, hospitality classes, and seminars that occur at the Open.

**58%**

**Los Angeles Airbnb Open  
attendees who were women**

**56%**

**Paris Airbnb Open attendees  
who were women**

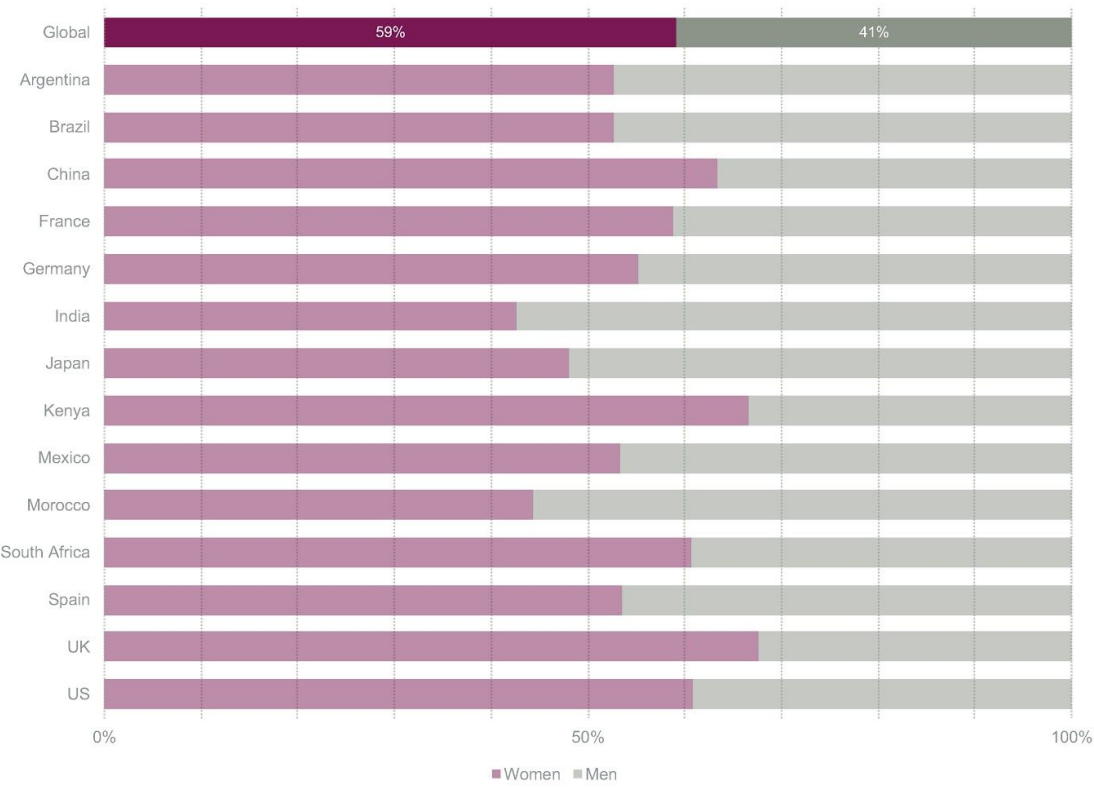
**61%**

**2016 host seminar leaders  
who were women**

The effort that women hosts invest in developing their hosting skills is reflected in the Airbnb Superhost program. Superhosts are specially designated by Airbnb as those who host guests frequently, receive a high number of five-star reviews, are exceptionally responsive to guests and are committed to reservations. Globally, nearly 60 percent of Airbnb Superhosts are women.



FIGURE 12: Percentage of Women Airbnb Superhosts in Select Countries



## Keila Borges in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

*Host testimonial lightly edited for length.*



“Two years after ending the relationship with my sons’ dad, I was struggling to balance caring for my kids, being great at work (I love what I do!), and keeping my sanity. So, in 2015, I started hosting, renting a room in the apartment where I live with my boys. At first, I found it daunting, but over time, I gained confidence and the Airbnb platform helped a lot with that. What brought Airbnb to my life was the possibility of an extra buck, but what made me embrace Airbnb home sharing was something else.

In April 2016 I became a Superhost, and a few weeks later I got my first invitation for a meetup: a breakfast with Airbnb’s co-founder Joe Gebbia in preparation for the Rio Olympics. At that breakfast, I discovered this amazing *community* of hosts. I met Airbnb’s co-founder Joe, who was willing to listen to people—ordinary people like me. It felt like Airbnb embraced me.

I got involved in the Airbnb community. I gave some presentations at Airbnb events. I spoke in front of more than 120 people during Olympics preparations. I hosted a workshop for the Rio Host Day. I went to Los Angeles to teach other hosts in a workshop about Life Balance. I lost my fear of public speaking! For me, I can say with certainty that hosting was a fundamental step in my personal trajectory.

After the Olympics, I used part of the money I earned during the event to hire a life coach who is helping me organize things and plan how I’m going to achieve my big big goals and dreams in the near future.

I consider all this as personal development, but it certainly boosted my behavior in my professional life and helped me to discover a lot of the potential and power that I have.”



## Pamellah Gakenia in Nairobi, Kenya

*Host testimonial lightly edited for length.*



“I’ve been managing my own wedding business in Nairobi for 10 years and have had many brides come to me, frustrated that they didn’t have anywhere for family members to stay. I started to think whether there was something I could do about that. I pulled all my savings together, got a place that was strategically near the airport, and started listing on Airbnb. When there were no brides I could host guests in transit. I can’t say that it was a great success straight away but since my first booking, I’ve never looked back!

Organizing weddings and hosting on Airbnb are very similar: they’re both about connecting with people. It was a humble beginning for me when I started out hosting. I didn’t have all the flashy things like a big-screen TV, but I made sure I was always there to receive my guests and, when possible, share a local meal with them, helping them with the endless questions and concerns they had about visiting my country. Out of these endless conversations, I have made some of my greatest friendships. I really believe there’s so much more to offer guests when they come and stay in your home.

I was approached to be an ambassador for Airbnb in Nairobi in November 2015. I’ve learned so much from other members of the community, so it feels good to be able to pass on this knowledge. We host regular meetups and share our experiences with each other. We love to welcome people into our homes here in Kenya, so the biggest thing I tell new hosts is to embrace everyone and welcome them all with open arms.

When I look around my neighborhood, I realize how many people have been supported by Airbnb. The money I’ve made has helped pay part of my sister’s doctorate degree, and I’ve been able to employ a young woman to help me look after one of my listings, too. She actually just graduated with a diploma in hospitality because of the work she’s been doing for me. I’ve encouraged friends and neighbors to open up their homes—not just because it will help them financially, but also because of the new network of friends they’ll make from all over the world. I believe there’s no better way to travel than in the comfort of someone’s home, being able to listen to stories from all over the world. It’s touched the lives of so many people I know here in Nairobi and beyond. Airbnb opens up doors of opportunity. It’s a very powerful thing.”

## Social Impacts

Globally, Airbnb is helping women create deeper social connections both with each other and with the communities in which they live. Hosting on Airbnb empowers women hosts to share their customs, culture, and neighborhoods with travelers from around the globe. Women hosts are sharing their lives and their stories with people from other cultures and communities, and in many cases forging friendships that last well beyond the reservation.

Additionally, women Airbnb hosts are actively participating in host communities in the cities in which they live, and many women hosts tell us that the social benefits are a key reason why they continue to host.

### Social Engagement with Guests From Around the World

Women Airbnb hosts have hosted guests from all over the world, including large numbers of women from other cultures. Airbnb hosts connect with guests from all walks of life, professions, races, ethnicities, educational backgrounds, rural and urban environments, familial arrangements, and sexual orientations. Hosts share their time, their homes, and their communities with guests, often showing them another culture; and guests, similarly, expose hosts to different cultures. Connecting people with people promotes dialogue, exposure, and personal growth, as one dimension of social empowerment.

**15M+**

2016 guest arrivals at women-hosted listings where guest was from different country than host

**6M+**

2016 woman-booked guest arrivals at woman-hosted listing where guests were from different country than host

**73%**

Percentage of women hosts who have hosted at least one guest who spoke a different primary language from herself

Certainly, the financial income that women hosts make through hosting is a key motivator to their continued use of Airbnb. But a significant number of women hosts tell us that they choose to host primarily for the social benefits rather than the financial ones. This is especially true of women hosts over age 60, as 82 percent of senior women hosts reported that hosting on Airbnb has helped them stay more socially and emotionally connected.<sup>13</sup>

Aside from earning additional income, women choose to host primarily for social motivations.

**59%**

Excluding financial motivations, women hosts who say they primarily wanted to host because they enjoyed being a guest or because they wanted to meet new people

<sup>13</sup> Airbnb. "Celebrating Airbnb's 60+ Host Community." Accessed January 10, 2017, a <http://blog.airbnb.com/celebrating-airbnbs-60-host-community/>.

## Belinda from Capetown, South Africa

*Host testimonial lightly edited for length.*



"I've been hosting on Airbnb for a little over a year now. It's been a really enriching and rewarding experience for me, and has far exceeded my expectations in terms of what the platform delivers individually and collectively.

For me, home sharing is an immensely intimate experience. It encourages meaningful connection between humans from the first engagement.

In today's technologically-driven world, where we are more connected yet ironically more disconnected than ever, I love that Airbnb allows me to connect so authentically with people from all walks of life around the globe. Most of my guests arrive as visitors, but leave as friends.

As a South African who has travelled extensively (more than 70 countries at last count), I've enjoyed being able to share and discuss the often troubled story of my own country with my guests. I've found that they are intrigued to learn about South Africa's interesting socio-political history through my eyes, the person with whom they are sharing a home. It's an utterly unique experience.

Hosting is helping me make some great connections in my local community too. A local person, Siby, acts as concierge and car security guard. My cleaner Lulu, a recent migrant from the Eastern Cape who doesn't speak much English, now earns enough to pay her kids' school fees. Moses, a Zimbabwean refugee, makes sure everything in the house functions optimally for guests. So it's not only me who is benefiting – others, especially those less economically fortunate than me, are also reaping rewards from this micro-enterprise.

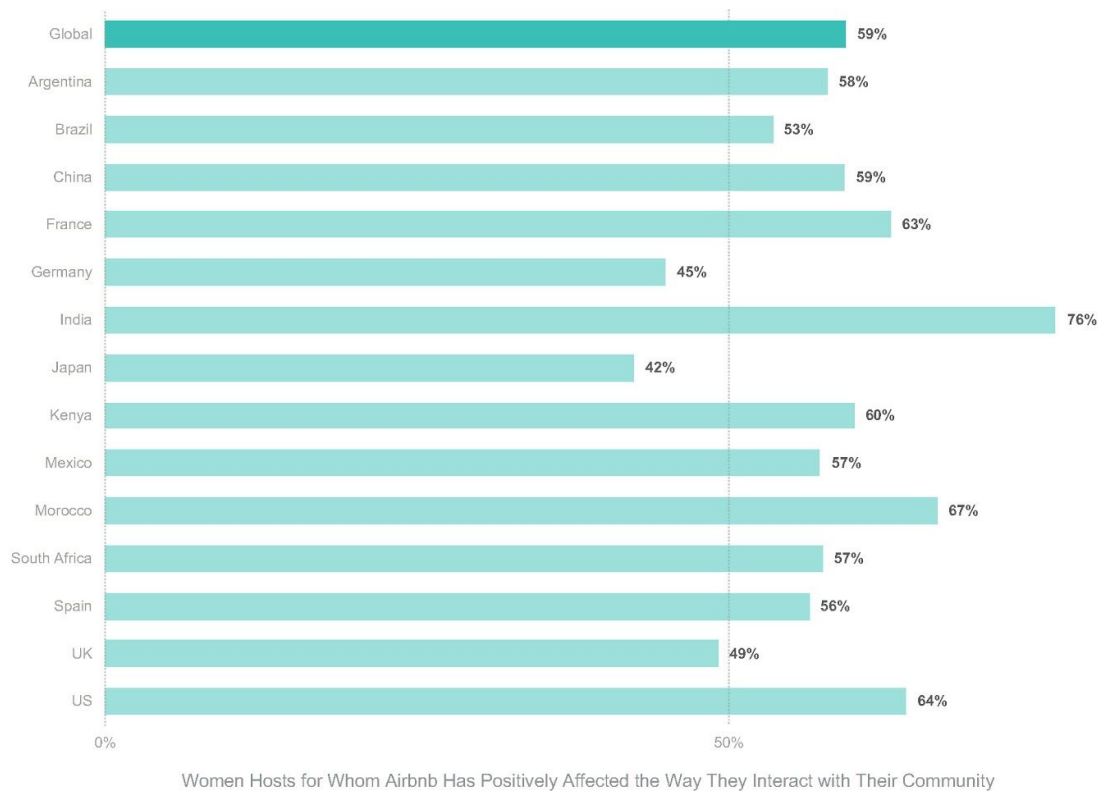
For me personally, Airbnb embodies the spirit of 'Ubuntu', a community-driven foundation of South African culture: "I am what I am because of who we all are".

## Social Engagement With Their Community

Women hosts are not only connecting with guests from around the world—for many, hosting also offers opportunities to build deeper connections within their own community. Airbnb hosts recommend businesses such as restaurants and shops to their guests, and many hosts tell us they take pride in showing travelers the local hideaways and gems that make their neighborhood unique.

The vast majority of women hosts tell us that hosting on Airbnb has had a positive impact on how they interact with their community. And 94 percent of women hosts also make local recommendations to their guests.

**FIGURE 13: Percentage of Women Hosts Who Agree that Hosting has Positively Affected the Way They Interact with Their Community**



**Notes:** Globally, 5 percent of hosts disagree that hosting has positively affected the way they interact with their community; and 36 percent neither agreed nor disagreed.

Many Airbnb hosts are also active participants in the larger Airbnb community, connecting and meeting with other Airbnb hosts in their city. In many cities, Airbnb hosts have joined together to form Home Sharing Clubs that act as a centralized forum for hosts to connect with each other and serve their community, engaging with local small businesses, nonprofits, and policymakers in their hometowns. Over 60 percent of these Home Sharing Clubs worldwide have been

founded by women hosts. Women are more likely than men to participate in political outreach, Host Sharing Club events, or community mobilization conversations.

**60%**

Percentage of Home Sharing  
Club founded by women hosts

**34%**

Women hosts are 34% more likely to meet with  
Airbnb staff one-on-one, engage in political  
outreach, or attend community events

## Global Fund for Women & Airbnb

Through a partnership with the Global Fund for Women, Airbnb is supporting mission-critical travel for women leaders and activists to attend trainings, meetings and speaking engagements across the globe. From Colombia and the Czech Republic to Kenya and Kyrgyzstan, women have traveled using Airbnb credits to create stronger alliances across women's movements globally.

In March 2016, Global Fund for Women grantees traveled from around the world for the United Nations' 60th Commission on the Status of Women in New York City. Many of these women leaders had never met before but bonded while staying together in their Airbnbs, sharing meals and conversations about the challenges that each of them face in their respective communities. Members of Fondo de Acción Urgente de América Latina (the Urgent Action Fund-Latin America) gathered together in an Airbnb in Colombia in December 2016 to host workshops and trainings for their network, while bonding with each other and their helpful hosts. Earlier in 2017, women's rights nongovernmental organizations from the Czech Republic and Slovakia were able to stay together in Airbnbs in Bratislava for a Women's Rights conference, bringing together advocates, volunteers, supporters and experts from around the globe in their shared work to end violence against women. The Executive Director of the Slovak-Czech Women's Fund explained, "It's our commitment to work for women's rights organizations and women in Central Europe, support them and bring them together, if possible. As advocates for women's rights, gender and social justice, we are very happy for having this opportunity to create a safe space for meeting with them."

Airbnb will continue to support the travel needs of Global Fund for Women grantees in 2017 to help unlock additional opportunities for authentic connections, networking and professional development.



## Tomomi from Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan



Tomomi has been a homestay host for years, hosting international guests through public international exchange programs. Although she enjoyed this type of hosting, she felt unsatisfied by the experience—most of the guests came to Japan as special delegates with specific purposes, which meant that she usually did not have enough time to get to know her guests well or show them her local community.

In autumn 2015, she was introduced to Airbnb by a friend who had traveled to various countries using Airbnb and enjoyed great local experiences. Tomomi was inspired. She could host through Airbnb to provide the type of experience she had been missing, connecting international guests with local activities.

Becoming an Airbnb host triggered her passion for revitalizing the local community's dignity and traditions by sharing them with people. Tomomi is a professional event producer specializing in promoting local events like seasonal festivals and local specialties like foods and traditional handmade crafts. When her guest arrivals coincide with local events, she brings them along and introduces them to the local community. Her senior neighbors are generally very shy and conservative, but when they meet her international guests, they become fully engaged in hosting and entertaining them. And Tomomi says that her Airbnb guests have a much greater desire to learn about the local culture and history. These positive interactions between Tomomi's guests and the local community members have even appeared in local newspapers.

Once, Tomomi hosted a guest on his birthday. That night, there happened to be a night festival event. Prior to her guest's arrival, Tomomi convinced all of market participants and her friends to prepare a birthday surprise. "Everyone was so excited to have this surprise. Some made a cake, some brought a guitar and some made decorations," Tomomi recalls. During the

celebrations, Tomomi's guest was so touched that he burst into tears. It was the moment that she really felt connected.

Her current project is promoting a forgotten pilgrimage of 88 local temples. Even locals have forgotten the pilgrimage tradition. Along the route, temples are deteriorating and struggling financially. Monks, who have traditionally maintained not only the temple's facilities but also good relationships among the temples, local community, and pilgrims, are scarce. "Traditionally, people in this local community once hosted pilgrims," Tomomi says. And she wants to bring this tradition back in the 21st century. Now, through her hosting, she is able to promote this pilgrimage to both locals and international travelers, collaborating with both local tourism groups and conventional promotion agencies.

Although Tomomi has never traveled abroad, through hosting on Airbnb, she really feels that she is connected and at the hub of a local community and the world.



## Conclusion

Airbnb is not a panacea for the many obstacles to greater empowerment that women face worldwide. But Airbnb is home to an already massive and rapidly growing number of women hosts in countries around the globe. At a time of great uncertainty around the future of work opportunities for women, and the complications that forces like automation will create, Airbnb can serve as a powerful way for women to independently achieve greater financial, professional, and social empowerment.

# Appendix

## Data Sources

The findings in this report are based on extensive data about Airbnb hosts and guests in calendar year 2016 (between January 1, 2016, and January 1, 2017).

Unless otherwise noted, all data and figures are based on the following data sources:

- Host Survey: an email survey of 112,000 hosts globally who hosted guests in 2016. More than 44,000 survey responses come from hosts in the study countries of Argentina, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, South Africa, Spain, UK, and the US. Over 26,000 of the survey responses come from women. Across countries, the survey sample sizes result in confidence intervals of 95% +/- < 5%. India and Kenya are exceptions, where smaller sample sizes result in confidence intervals of 95% +/- 8% and 95% +/- 11% respectively.
- Airbnb administrative data: proprietary Airbnb data on bookings, hosts, and guests in 2016.

## Glossary of Terms

Several common terms used throughout the report are defined below.

### *Typical Host Earnings*

Median value of the total income earned by a host during the one-year study period. Annual earnings are presented for typical hosts. Presenting the median value for all hosts who were active as of the start of a one-year period provides the most representative values for the Airbnb host community.

### *Lowest and Highest Income Brackets*

Figure 4's lowest and highest income brackets—based on total household earnings (outside of Airbnb earnings)—are defined in the following table.

Country	Lowest Income Bracket (Total Household Earnings Outside of Airbnb Income)	Highest Income Bracket (Total Household Earnings Outside of Airbnb Income)
Argentina	< 4,800 ARS (< \$360 USD)	> 48,400 ARS (> \$3,600 USD)
Brazil	< 1,450 BRL (< \$360 USD)	> 14,499 BRL (> \$3,600 USD)
China	< 17,000 CNY (< \$25,100 USD)	> 149,800 CNY (> \$24,400 USD)
France	< 20,600 EUR (< \$22,900 USD)	> 44,500 EUR (> \$49,400 USD)
Germany	< 18,600 EUR (< \$20,600 USD)	> 42,500 EUR (> \$47,100 USD)

<b>India</b>	< 54,200 INR (< \$900 USD)	> 867,100 INR (> \$13,900 USD)
<b>Japan</b>	< 2,440,000 JPY (< \$21,500 USD)	> 7,370,000 JPY (> \$65,000 USD)
<b>Mexico</b>	< 55,400 MXN (< \$4,200 USD)	> 602,000 MXN (> \$45,300 USD)
<b>South Africa</b>	< 9,600 ZAR (< \$1,100 USD)	> 307,600 ZAR (> \$35,700 USD)
<b>Spain</b>	< 13,700 EUR (< \$15,200 USD)	> 37,300 EUR (> \$41,400 USD)
<b>UK</b>	< 17,000 GBP (< \$25,100 USD)	> 43,000 GBP (> \$63,600 USD)
<b>US</b>	< \$15,000 USD	> \$100,000 USD

### *Host Gender*

Hosts can optionally report their gender when creating a user profile on Airbnb.com. They can select a gender of Male, Female, or Other. The data in this report reflects information about hosts who identified their gender as Female.

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