EQUALS

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

EQUALS Her Digital Skills Initiative

EQUALS Global Partnership

The [EQUALS Global Partnership for Digital Gender Equality](#) is a global partnership bringing together international organisations, governments, civil society and research institutions to mobilize a movement for change and deliver practical, integrated solutions as scale as to bridge the global digital gender gap. It was founded in 2016 by the International Telecommunications Union, UN Women, GSMA, International Trade Centre and UN University. Today, EQUALS boasts nearly 100 partners dedicated to closing the gender digital divide.

EQUALS Her Digital Skills Initiative

I. About the EQUALS Her Digital Skills Initiative

The ***Her Digital Skills Initiative powered by the EQUALS** Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age* aims to provide **1 million girls and women** with gender transformative IT skills training and e-Mentoring by 2026.

This is a [collective commitment](#) pledged by the leading partners of the *Her Digital Skills Initiative powered by EQUALS* - GSMA, EY, ITU and Women's WorldWide Web (W4) - to the **Innovation and Technology Action Coalition of Generation Equality**.

The *Her Digital Skills Initiative powered by EQUALS* comprises three elements:

I. *Tech4Girls workshops* that offer hands-on STEM activities and training to girls (aged 10-16) and young women (aged 16-25). The workshops are designed to inspire girls and young women to pursue STEM-related studies and careers and to boost their confidence in their ability to pursue STEM studies and careers in tech or tech-related fields;

II. *EQUALS Digital Badges:* Access to free, adapted (gender-transformative) IT skills training and the possibility to obtain an EQUALS qualification. The goal of this training and certification programme is to facilitate girls' and women's access to further IT training, and aid them in seeking formal employment opportunities in the tech sector and tech-related fields; and

III. An innovative *e-Mentoring programme* that connects professionals from companies in the tech and mobile industries with young women (ages 18 to 25) as they pursue higher studies or embark on their professional career paths. The goal of the programme is to increase young women's interest in and uptake of studies and careers in tech and tech-related fields.

The overarching goals of the *Her Digital Skills Initiative* are to reduce the barriers to girls' and women's participation in STEM/STEAM studies and careers and to increase the talent pipeline of girls and young women in STEM/STEAM.

More information about each of the three elements of the Initiative is provided below:

1) EQUALS Tech4Girls Workshops

The Tech4Girls Initiative, powered by the EQUALS partnership for digital gender equality, offers hands-on educational workshops to underserved girls (10-16) and young women (16-25), during which participants learn about different technologies, hear from industry experts and leaders and gain a better understanding of careers in tech.

The Tech4Girls workshop series aims to make girls and young women feel welcome and empowered in the industry and to overcome gender barriers in relation to access and use of digital technologies. This important initiative has the potential to shape the workforce of tomorrow, ensuring that the next generation of girls and women acquires the diverse skills and perspectives needed to thrive in the tech industry and for the tech industry to thrive.

Tech4Girls Workshop Objectives:

- Participants increase their knowledge of the exciting range of tech-related employment/career opportunities and how tech is embedded in most occupations.
- Participants engage with and increase their knowledge of tech and a range of tech skills by completing the "Introduction to tech through e-commerce" or "Mobile app development" workshop module.
- Participants increase their confidence (self-efficacy) in their ability to pursue further tech studies/training and/or employment and careers in tech.
- Participants increase their knowledge of how technology can support and boost their employability/livelihoods.
- Participants are more inclined to proactively pursue further tech studies/training and careers in tech/tech-related employment.

The key quantitative impact Tech4Girls data to date is listed below:

- 84% of workshop participants said that upon completion of the workshop, they had improved their understanding of STEAM and possible career paths within STEAM.

- 90% of workshop participants said that having completed the workshop, they felt confident or *very* confident about pursuing further studies/a career in tech.

- 93% of participants who completed the workshop said they would like to pursue further tech training.

- 77% of participants who completed the workshop said they would like to use their digital skills to work in the tech sector.

2) EQUALS Digital Badges

The "EQUALS Digital Badges" programme is a response to the urgent need to bridge the digital gender divide and equip girls and young women around the world with the requisite digital skills to access formal employment, pursue entrepreneurial opportunities and careers in tech and tech-related employment. The EQUALS Digital Badges program has a dual objective:

- to equip girls and young women with digital skills and a recognized diploma that will facilitate women's access to formal employment and entrepreneurship, including in tech sectors
- to foster girls' and young women's interest in and pursuit of further tech education and tech-related careers

This solution addresses the challenge of the digital gender divide by providing girls and young women, aged 16-25 years, with a free, high-quality, gender transformative digital skills training and certification program. The EQUALS Digital Badges training program will offer girls and women the opportunity to acquire crucial, practical digital skills - the necessary skills to work in technology-rich environments and tech/tech-related fields - and a recognized qualification, with the goal of facilitating women's access to employment opportunities, notably in tech.

3) The EQUALS Tech4Girls e-Mentorship Programme

The EQUALS Tech4Girls e-Mentorship Programme is an innovative e-Mentorship programme that offers young women, aged 18-25, the opportunity to be matched with mentors from the tech and mobile industries. The mentors contribute to the mentees' professional and personal development, and support and guide them on their learning and career paths.

The EQUALS Tech4Girls e-Mentorship programme and platform were launched on 8 March 2021 to mark International Women's Day.

Tech4Girls alumni (Tech4Girls workshop participants aged 18 and above) have the opportunity to take part in the e-Mentoring programme and to be matched with mentors from among the mobile and tech industries.

The goal of the Tech4Girls e-Mentoring programme is to enable the mentees, through the mentee-mentor relationship, to:

- develop valuable soft skills that will boost the young women's employability;
- learn about the wide, exciting range of professional applications of tech skills;
- familiarize themselves with the world of professional employment, notably tech-related employment; and

- develop their self-confidence and embrace their professional ambitions.

The format of the current e-Mentoring programme pilot phase, available exclusively in English, consists of a "soft skills e-Mentoring programme". The programme lasts approximately eight weeks and mentor-mentee exchanges take the form of written correspondence, guided by a "soft skills syllabus" devoted to the development of crucial soft skills. The goal of each weekly topic is to foster specific soft skills, such as goal setting, developing personal strengths, problem solving, teamwork, time management, leadership skills and building self-confidence.

All exchanges between mentors and mentees take place via a dedicated e-mentorship platform (https://equals.edukadu.com/en/home). Mentors and mentees are supported and guided throughout the entire e-Mentoring process by programme coordinators and receive a certificate and a Mentor Badge upon completion of the eight-week programme.

At the end of the eight-week programme, mentors and mentees complete an online impact evaluation survey on the platform, which captures a range of qualitative and quantitative data to assess the impact of the programme.

The initial quantitative and qualitative data from the pilot programme are highly promising:

- 100% of mentees reported that they were more than satisfied or very satisfied (a score of 4 or 5) with their relationship and exchanges with their mentor;

- On average, 90% of mentees reported that they that significantly improved their knowledge, skills and abilities with regard to the topics covered in the programme (a score of 4 or 5);

- 96% of mentees reported that they would like to participate in future EQUALS Tech4Girls E-mentorship programmes to develop further skills.

TESTIMONIES

"*The EQUALS Tech4Girls e-Mentorship programme is an excellent initiative for young girls and women to develop soft skills that are essential for everyday business and personal interactions. My hope is that young girls and women from the diaspora and throughout the world can enter the programme and use it to complement and develop their existing strengths and skills.*"

– a mentee from the Caribbean who completed the 1st cycle of the EQUALS Tech4Girls e-Mentorship programme

"*The EQUALS Tech4Girls e-Mentorship programme gave me the chance to share my professional story in order to help a young woman on her career path. This is remarkable to me. And the best part is that I also learned from my mentee in the process! It was a satisfying and a really nice experience!*"

– a mentor from the US who completed the 1st cycle of the EQUALS Tech4Girls e-Mentorship programme

IV. Measures of Success for the Initiative's Impact

- Number of girls and young women served by the EQUALS Her Digital Skills Initiative (Tech4Girls, Badges and E-Mentoring programme)
- Number of girls and young women who return for continuous learning after initial participation in one of the EQUALS Digital Skills Initiative
- Number of young women who significantly improve their knowledge, skills and abilities with regard to the soft skills topics covered within the frame of the e-Mentorship programmePercentage of girls and young women in Tech4Girls workshops who increase their knowledge of STEM career opportunities (target > 70%).
- Percentage of girls and young women in Tech4Girls workshops who increase their confidence in their ability to pursue further tech studies/training and/or employment and careers in tech (target > 70%).
- Percentage of girls and young women in Tech4Girls programs who are inclined to continue with a STEM-related training program within 6 months of completing the Tech4Girls program, for example, an EQUALS Badges course or another tech training course (target > 60%).

- Number of beneficiaries who successfully complete 1 or more Badges training modules[1]
- Average scores of beneficiaries who successfully complete 1 or more Badges training modules
- Number of beneficiaries who successfully complete all EHDS Badges training modules and obtain the EHDS Badge[2]

NB: The above list is not exhaustive

NB: Impact Assessment data is obtained through pre- and post-workshop and e-mentoring programme participant surveys and impact assessments which capture quantitative and qualitative data

For further information, please contact:

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[1] Please note that EQUALS Badges modules content is currently in development
[2] Starting in 2023