#eSkills4Girls

SNAPSHOT	
Organization(s)	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project Name	#eSkills4Girls Initiative
Location	Global
Date(s) of Implementation	2017 – present
Partner(s) / Funder(s)	G20 members; private sector companies; academia; civil society organizations

ABOUT #ESKILLS4GIRLS

In the framework of Germany's G20 presidency 2017, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) launched the initiative #eSkills4Girls to overcome the gender digital divide and promote the participation of women and girls in the digital transformation.

Starting with the Chinese G20 presidency, digitalization has been receiving special attention from the G20 as the spread of digital technologies has been considered an important driver of development and growth within the G20 member states and beyond. The digital ministers' 2017 declaration and the roadmap take note of this increased awareness and cover 11 fields of action and ambitious goals regarding the near future of digitalization. Bridging the gender digital divide is one of the 11 fields. Most importantly, the declaration supports the G20 initiative "#eSkills4Girls" and calls for building synergies.

"The empowerment of women is an essential cross-cutting issue and an important area for the future of the G20 states", said the German Chancellor Angela Merkel during her speech at the Women20 Summit in Berlin in April 2017. #eSkills4Girls brings both topics together: it is about women's contribution to digitalization and about education. #eSkills4Girls is a key issue for the future, because half the population is still underrepresented in digitalization, particularly in developing and emerging countries.

In 2018, under the Argentinian G20 presidency, the closing of the gender digital divide has been taken up by the Education and the Employment Working Group.

GLOBAL COMMITMENT

At their summit in Hamburg on 7 and 8 July 2017, the G20 leaders endorsed the #eSkills4Girls statement as an annex to their Leaders' Declaration.[1] The statement defines common goals to facilitate education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for women and girls in the digital economy.

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[1] #eSkills4Girls Statement (2017). *Transforming the future of women and girls in the digital economy.* Available at: https://www.g20germany.de/Content/DE/_Anlagen/G7_G20/2017-g20-initiative-eskills4girls-en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4.

OBSERVATIONS

Within the statement, G20 members:

- Recognized that **digital skills are vital to participate in and succeed in the digital economy**. As such, G20 members recognized the need to provide women and girls with tailored opportunities to develop relevant skills and to effectively use them.

- Recognized the importance of encouraging girls' and young women's **early interest in STEM** subjects to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and empowerment in the digital economy.

- Acknowledged the importance of providing educational opportunities for **digital literacy** for girls and young women of all ages, particularly for the most vulnerable groups.

- Emphasized that increasing **women's representation in STEM-related technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs** is key to increasing women's representation in the digital economy.

- Noted that **lack of access and affordability are two of the most important obstacles to women and girls' initial access and use of technological tools**. G20 members further recognized the importance of gender equality in education, and the need to address discriminatory norms, structures and institutions which may prevent that access to education and may make it difficult for women to develop their capacities as users, employees and leaders in the digital economy

- Recognized the need to generate resources to **increase the security and privacy of women online**. This includes increasing awareness of prevention cyber violence to promote the safety of women online.

- Recognized the need to **develop content and services in other languages and formats** in order to make it more accessible to women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable groups.

- Emphasized that the **participation of women in the digital economy**, particularly in leadership and decision-making positions, is **indispensable to economic growth**.

- Supported the need to **enable women's and girls' entrepreneurship** in the digital economy.

- Recognized the **need for reliable and exhaustive data on women and girls in the ICT** in order to support any country level decision-making with regards to policies.

COMMITMENTS

In line with these observations, G20 Members made the following commitments:

- **Promote the collaboration and sharing of best practices and lessons**, by collectively and actively contributing to the #eSkills4Girls online knowledge and exchange platform.

- **Encourage partnerships of all parties and stakeholders according to the 2030 Agenda**, and to increase public and private sector, international organizations, academia and civil society partnerships.

- **Commit to partnerships with the African governments to promote gender-inclusive digital economy**, according to the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

- **Promote and provide education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for women and girls in the digital economy**, particularly for low income and developing countries.

KEY ACTIVITIES

To translate the political commitments into practice, numerous activities have been implemented as part of the #eSkills4Girls initiative. They are the result of the collaboration between governments, private sector, academia and civil society organizations.

PRIVATE-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

The promotion of digital skills for women and girls is not only a matter of equality but also pays off in economic terms. Thus, global IT players like Google and SAP have supported the #eSkills4Girls initiative with financial resources and own projects.

#eSkills4Girls Africa Meetup
In May 2017, BMZ, UNESCO and SAP brought together over 30 female tech leaders from all over Africa at the **#eSkills4Girls Africa Meetup**. The event offered a unique opportunity to network, discuss challenges and effective approaches and to further develop capacities and strategies for successfully running and scaling up initiatives related to girls in ICT. Using the results of a survey of current needs among the female tech leaders, trainings were offered in EU funding opportunities, moderation techniques, media and communication, networking strategies, and design thinking. Among the tech leaders were: *Carolyne Ekyarisiima*, a Mandela Washington Fellow and Tigo Digital Change Maker, a social entrepreneur and founder of Apps and Girls, an organization that works to bridge the Tech gender gap in Africa by empowering girls with coding and entrepreneurship skills; and *Agang K. Ditlhogo*, the co-founder of The Clicking Generation-ICT Academy for Kids and Teens, a social enterprise which offers computing and technology curriculum to kids and teens in both urban and rural Botswana. This event led to the creation of the #eSkills4Girls network to continue the dialogue among the tech leaders.

Africa Code Week
Spearheaded by SAP since 2015, the **Africa Code Week (ACW)** is a continent-wide digital literacy initiative reaching out to hundreds of schools, teachers, governments, businesses and non-profits. For the 2017 edition, BMZ supported 20 coding workshops in 17 African countries specifically designed for more than 8,000 participating girls and young women. The workshops take place in tech hubs, one Juvenile Centre and a refugee camp. Among the main challenges described by the local organizations were lack of hardware, power outages, poor Internet connection, and low levels of digital literacy among the participating girls. 90% of them were at a very basic level in using computers or had no previous exposure at all. Most of the girls and young women were recruited in schools, and there was a great interest among girls to participate.

The women who take part in these workshops were between the ages 8 to 27 years and came from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. Volunteer trainers and teachers introduced the women and girls to the basics of coding using Scratch, as well as to mobile application development and software programming languages. The Asikana Network based in Zambia, combined the coding workshop with a one-day hackathon. This was set up with a goal of creating efficient solutions to community problems. The two winning teams were provided an opportunity to participate in the accelerator program after the hackathon. This accelerator program is conducted by BongoHive, Zambia's Innovation and Technology Hub for startup businesses.

In May 2017, #eSkills4Girls invited over 30 female tech leaders from all over Africa for the Transform Africa Summit in Rwanda. This gave the women an opportunity to network, discuss the various challenges and efficient solutions, and strategies for increasing initiatives related to girls in digital industry.[2]

#eSkills4Girls Hackathon
Google supported the **#eSkills4Girls Hackathon** – an intensive work session in four different regions worldwide – in Eastern Europe, South America, Eastern Africa and South Asia. Teams were asked to create new and tangible solutions for the gender digital divide. The winning team was 'Developers in Vogue' from Ghana. They developed tailored and personalized curricula to train women in software development, data science and match them with real-time projects and jobs.

GLOBAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS

EQUALS
BMZ together with UNESCO has assumed the leadership of the Skills Coalition of **EQUALS – the global partnership for gender equality in the digital age**. The shared vision of the Skills Coalition is to increase the participation of women in STEM in schools, universities and vocational training. Therefore, the members work on improving the data base on women's digital skills, design campaigns to make women opt for a tech career and develop principles for gender-inclusive digital skills trainings.

The success of the Skills Coalition is based on:
- **Regular meetings** among the coalition members;
- **A shared commitment** to achieve the deliverables of the workplan of the coalition in collaboration with other coalition members; and
- Participation in the work of the coalition members by **sharing resources and staff time**.

In cooperation with the BMZ, UNESCO works on the following deliverables:

Develop and publish principles and good practices for quality and gender-transformative skills training. The Skills Partnership will draw on existing examples and frameworks to develop EQUALS Skills Coalition principles that will aim to identify key considerations for governments, international organizations, donor agencies and in particular different educational facilities to establish quality and gender-transformative skills training initiatives. Instead of providing high-level policy advice, the work will outline strategies to engender ICT throughout the curriculum; hone pedagogy to support girls' and women's empowerment; and tailor programs for gender equality outcomes. The principles will provide a gender lens through which

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[2] Africa Code Week – Factsheet.

different stakeholders can analyse current principles and practices and make changes or initiate new initiatives to ensure girls' and women's essential and equal role in digital knowledge societies. The aim is to have a substantial number of actors adopt these new principles 2019 and are use them to guide their work.

Develop operational guidance for practitioners as a reference framework for the conception, implementation and evaluation of projects to advance quality and gender-transformative skills training. The EQUALS Skills Coalition will establish an online platform for practitioners to access tools and information for the conception, implementation and evaluation of existing and new projects that teach digital skills for women and girls. Backed by political commitments (e.g. the G20 #eSkills4Girls declaration), the online platform will aim to support the translation of political will into operational strategies to support the digital inclusion of women and girls. It will include data on women's and girls' digital skills; projects supporting digital skills development in different settings; and instruments and tools for awareness-raising, mentoring, advocacy, training, community-building, capacity-building, outreach, communication and research; case studies on promising programs; and practical guidelines and tools. It will draw on existing materials and publications, consultations with relevant stakeholders, and the Digital Development Principles.

DIGITAL SKILLS PROJECTS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

29 flagship projects on digital skills for women and girls have been set up or have been strengthened by the G20 and its partners.

More Job Opportunities for Palestinian Youth
One German flagship project is *"More job opportunities for Palestinian youth."* On behalf of BMZ, the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the KFW Development Bank are supporting the introduction of dual studies in Palestine. The program is part of a special initiative designed to stabilise and promote development in North Africa and the Middle East run by the BMZ. Through the projects that make up this special initiative, BMZ is helping to open economic and social prospects for people in the region.

Based on a successful dual study model developed in Germany, the newly designed Dual Studies Program of Al-Quds University (AQU) aims to bring about the integration of theory and practice and to link university studies more closely with labour market needs. The first of its kind in the country and sub-region, the Program offers an innovative approach to Palestinian higher education, combining academic studies with on-the-job training under real life conditions in private companies. Initially, three subjects have been launched at the new Dual Study Faculty: Electrical Engineering, Business Administration and Information Technology (IT).

Both the theoretical and practical stages of these B.A. programs are being developed and applied in cooperation with a wide range of partner businesses to ensure that the curricula meet their needs and deliver the competencies they require. As such, the Program relies on the close cooperation between Al-Quds University and the Palestinian private sector.

Since the Dual Study Program began in January 2015, more than 160 Palestinian partner businesses have signed up to the Program and, together, they are offering 312 paid on-the-job training places each year.

The dual curricula for these subjects have been developed in collaboration with private sector representatives and have been accredited.

In total, the project plans to prepare at least 500 students for successful careers, at least one-third of whom will be young women. To this end, a gender analysis has been prepared which informs several measures specifically designed to recruit young women to the studies program and to support them in entering the labour market after graduation.

WeCode
WeCode is a programming school and software agency focused on women, set up in East Africa. This school is supported by a partnership of GIZ, German Cooperation, PSF and ICT Chamber. The first part of this program is a 11-week long bootcamp. The best students from this bootcamp go into a 15 weeks advanced courses such as Mobile App + Frontend Developer, Q &A Specialist and Data Analyst.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR POLICYMAKERS

Capacity development for policy and decision-makers is critical in ensuring that they are advocates and champions for the policy recommendations on digital skills for women and girls. A series of #eSkills4Policymakers workshops will be conducted by the World Wide Web Foundation through a partnership of experts drawn from civil society and intergovernmental and developmental organizations like UNESCO and the African Development Bank (AfDB), with the support of BMZ.

These trainings will focus primarily on policy and decision-makers working in the education sector. In addition, representatives of government institutions that act as enablers such as affordable access to internet and devices, access to government-held information via ICTs, privacy and data protection considerations will be targeted. The trainings will draw upon the network of grassroots initiatives conducting digital skills training for women and girls, the #eSkills4Girls Africa Network. This would have the added benefit of facilitating discourse between women and youth with policymakers, bringing much needed perspectives from their experience to the policy table and further strengthening multi-stakeholder engagement.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

An online platform to allow knowledge exchange
The #eSkills4Girls online platform showcases projects on digital inclusion, shares stories about female role models and bundles information about studies, data and events by different partners.

Promoting role models of women and girls in tech
Female role models who have created successful tech careers are an inspiration for young women and girls to discover their opportunities. With a study and a video, the initiative acknowledges women who work every day to challenge existing gender roles and stereotypes. In 2018, a book publication is envisaged to further increase the visibility of female role models in the tech industry.