

## Concept Note

### **African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI) Training of Trainers and Second Phase Launch:**

#### **1. Background**

##### The Digital Gender Gap

Globally women comprise of 28.4 per cent of the work force engaged in Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and only an average of 30 in Sub Saharan Africa. <sup>1</sup>

The divide remains wide in the least developed countries (LDCs), where only 19 per cent of women are using the Internet (12 percentage points lower than men), the landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) (27 per cent of women versus 38 per cent of men), in Africa this is 24 per cent versus 35 per cent<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, according to the GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report 2019, women in low- and middle-income countries are 10 per cent less likely than men to own a mobile device, and 23 per cent less likely to make use of the internet, as compared to their male counterparts<sup>3</sup>. Women's lower levels of mobile ownership and use not only reflects existing gender inequalities, but also threatens to compound them. If the mobile gender gap is not addressed, women risk being left behind as societies and economies digitise. Affordability, literacy, patriarchy and digital skills, a perceived lack of relevance, and safety and security concerns are the most common barriers to mobile internet access and use for women.

Closing this digital gender gap requires a seismic upskilling and empowerment approach. Initiatives that are focussed on growing digital economy participation and support the development of relevant content, applications, and services by and for women should be prioritised. Further, access to Information is a human right for all and digital solutions are to be promoted without gender boundaries in order to increase the inclusive access to information in the digital era. We must take a strong generational gender lens to the digital divide if we are to achieve meaningful and sustainable change for a digital revolution by, with girls. This must be done urgently in order to achieve the goals underpinned by the African Union [Agenda 2063](#), the [one million by 2021 initiative](#) and the [Global Agenda 2030 \(SDGs\)](#).

Research has shown that 90 per cent of future jobs will require ICT skills and some two million new jobs will be created in the computer, mathematical, architecture and engineering fields.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000253479>

<sup>2</sup> ITU Facts and Figures 2021, available <https://www.itu.int/itu-d/reports/statistics/2021/11/15/the-gender-digital-divide/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/GSMA-Connected-Women-The-Mobile-Gender-Gap-Report-2019.pdf>

COVID-19 has also underscored the growing importance of digital technologies to Africa's economic future and building back better. It has made clear that Africa's digital transformation presents new possibilities for decent and resilient jobs for youth<sup>4</sup>.

In addition, exposure to ICT and STEM provides safeguarding information, tools for reporting risks and incidences to authorities, access to post abuse care and rehabilitative support, connects multi country networks of girls who advocate for an end to harmful practices. Therefore, it is crucial that girls develop the ICT skills needed and learn to code to be part of the fast-growing sectors not only to thrive in the future job market and use their coding skills to close the gender gap in the tech world and the overall gender digital divide, but also to enhance their knowledge and capacity in regards to their right and protect themselves and others from harmful practices.

### The African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI)

The African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI) was commissioned by UN Women and the African Union Commission (AUC) in collaboration with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The African Union Commission (AUC) through the Departments of Social Affairs now known as AU-Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, the Women, Gender and Youth division and the Human resource, Science and technology department now known as Education, Science, Technology & Innovation provide technical support to this initiative which aims to train and empower a minimum of 2000 young girls aged between 17-25, across Africa to become computer programmers, creators and designers, placing them on track to take up studies and careers in the information, communication and technology (ICT), education and coding sectors. The initiative has two key strategies namely: coding camps and mainstreaming ICT, coding and gender into the national curricula. Moreover, it promotes the implementation of national media campaigns involving role models (e.g. women in ICT, female teachers in schools) and utilizes an on-line platform to enhance networking among the girls, trainers and mentors.

This First phase of the initiative, launched in April 2018, achieved important results during the first phase of its implementation which was concluded in December 2019. At the 53rd session of the Economic Commission for Africa, COM 21 in 2020 and 2021, the AUC, UN Women, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UNECA jointly organized successful webinars and multistakeholder policy dialogue bringing together AGCCI beneficiaries, policy makers and private sector to ensure that the 2020 Covid-19 global crisis does not affect the gains so far achieved while also continuing to mobilize resource to put in place and launch the second phase.

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, the UN ECA in collaboration with the ITU conducted a hybrid continental coding camp for girls between the ages of 13 and 25. The camp was held at the UNECA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 30th November to 11th December

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<sup>4</sup> ITU-ILO joint programme on *Boosting decent jobs and enhancing skills for youth in Africa's digital economy*, supported by the African Union. <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Africa/Pages/projects/2020/jobs-skills.aspx>



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2020. During the camp, 2500 girls and young women from across Africa took part, including 124 trainees who attended in person, and the rest participated virtually.

UN Women, AUC, ITU, UNECA, and partners, with financial support from the Government of Belgium will thus implement the second phase of AGCCI which aims to support the coordination of the project activities in five selected countries Burundi, Niger and Mali, Tanzania and Mozambique.

More concretely, the partnership will support the organization of 10 coding camps in the five countries (2 camps per country) bringing together young girls of 17-25 years for a two-week training. The partnership will further support the AGCCI online platform with new content, additional functionalities and increased capacity which will help girl coders to continuously update their skills and connect with a supportive online community to share ideas and opportunities. Moreover, they will have skills, confidence, and the resolve to tackle barriers, overcome gender stereotypes and challenge institutional cultural practices and social norms that keep them away from jobs and from pursuing higher education. The AGCCI online platform at its new location within the ITU Academy platform will thus become an increasingly vibrant space for girls to connect among themselves and with those who are already part of the AGCCI community.

To ensure sustained efforts in bridging the gender digital divide, the winners from the AGCCI Coding Camp would be qualified to participate in the ECA's Connected African Girls Incubation Program, an initiative designed to help young women create and grow their tech businesses and become a part of the African startup ecosystem.

Through the partnership, the agencies aim to strengthen advocacy with African Union Member States to accelerate mainstreaming of gender, coding and ICT in national curricula for sustainable and inclusive development.

## **2. Proposed activities**

### **I. Training of Trainers**

The Training of Trainers (ToT) aims to create a pool of trainers who will provide trainings in the national coding camps in the selected priority countries in 2022 and 2023. The TOT will ensure that training module and teaching systems is standardized. Thus, UN Women will bring on board two international ICT and one gender experts who will design a training curriculum in close consultation with AUC particularly the department of Education, Science, Technology & Innovation (ESTI) as the technical lead along with UN partners, and with input from ITU and UNECA.

Around 60 Trainees will be mobilized and selected through the UN Women country offices based in 10 priority countries namely, Mali, Niger, Mozambique, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, South Africa, Senegal and DR Congo. Accordingly, six trainees from each priority country will be recruited through a competitive process and receive training.

The TOT will be taking place in Dar es salaam-Tanzania, from **25-27 April 2022** which will be followed by the launch of the AGCCI-phase II programme on **28 April 2022**.

### Objectives

- Create a pool of trainers to provide trainings at national coding camps on ICT initiatives, digital, robotics and different programming languages involving young girls, to address gender mainstreaming issues.
- Develop a standardized training system for all national coding camps under AGCCI and ensure that the online platform supports the training and sharing.

### Expected Outcomes

- 60 trainers from 10 African countries trained
- Standardized training module and teaching system developed
- Roadmap of national coding camps developed in close consultation with trainers

## II. Launch of the second phase of the African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI)

Following the completion of the first phase in 2019 and the successful multistakeholder virtual platforms in 2020, the AUC and UN Women together with ITU, ECA, UNESCO and UNICEF will be launching the next phase of the initiative on **28<sup>th</sup> April in Tanzania**.

The launch will bring together officials from the AUC Department of Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, Government of Tanzania, ITU, UNECA and other UN agencies, private sector and AGCCI Alumni to discuss on how to leverage on the untapped potential of ICT in the continent to ensure that women and girls benefit and contribute to this sector. The launch event will mark the official commencement of the second phase of the AGCCI.

### Objectives

- Launch the second phase of the African Girls Can Code Initiative.
- Raise the awareness of Member States on AGCCI activities/results and solicit commitment for national implementation by targeted countries.
- Mobilize private sector and potential partners including media to create an AGCCI network of supporters in African countries.

## Expected Outcomes

- Visibility of the African Girls Can Code Initiative enhanced.
- A multi-stakeholder network of partners that support the AGCCI created.
- Reports and AGCCI participant data will be shared to facilitate collaboration between partners' initiatives such as ECA's Connected African Girls.

## Participants

The launch will be attended by ICT and coding experts, AUC and UN representatives, permanent representatives/embassies of the 10 priority countries, delegates from the government of Tanzania including Ministries of women, education and Technology, Belgium Embassy and other Embassies represented in Tanzania, private sector participants including those in technology and innovation as well as media and key women leaders in the sector

### 3. Date and Format

The session will be conducted in hybrid format on **28 April 2022**

### 4. Logistics

A logistical note detailing information on travel, accommodation, venue and other relevant matters will be shared in due course.

### 5. Language

The TOT will be conducted in AU languages namely: English, French and Portuguese.

The launch event will be held in three AU languages namely: English, French and Portuguese.

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