#eSkills4Girls

A global initiative to promote digital skills for women and girls

The digital divide is female...

The digital transformation is changing our world and the ways we live, work and learn. Particularly people in developing countries are at risk of being excluded from the benefits of the digital transformation and most of them are girls and women. Worldwide, more than 250 million fewer women than men have access to the internet, even though being online is one of today's key requirements for social and economic participation. The digital divide is not only a matter of access to infrastructure and technology, but it is also a matter of digital skills. The acquisition of relevant digital skills for women is often restricted by multiple factors at the individual, family, school and society-level eventually leading to the underrepresentation of women in digital education and the tech industry. Greater female inclusion online and in the digital sector can also turn into a threat for girls' digital privacy and security, manifesting in cyber violence, sexual harassment and gender discrimination.

... but the digital future can only be built together

Never before have there been as many movements for women in tech as there were in recent years and entrepreneurs, policy makers and activists worldwide advocate for the empowerment of women in technology. Digital skills and knowledge of digital technologies are key to provide access to information and to give women a voice online and offline. To this end, women develop innovative platforms which strengthen participation and women's rights, support digital skills trainings for girls and young women at schools and universities and found start-ups enabling employment and future prospects. All of the supporters send a clear message: Women can – and should – play crucial roles in the digital world: as learners, as users, as employees, as entrepreneurs, and as leaders.

#eSkills4Girls: Making the case for the digital empowerment of women and girls through education

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 to promote the participation of women and girls in the digital economy. At the G20 summit in Hamburg in 2017, the G20 leaders endorsed the #eSkills4Girls statement as an annex to their Leaders' Declaration. The statement defines common goals to facilitate education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for women and girls in the digital economy.

To translate the political commitments into practice, BMZ implements numerous activities under the framework of the initiative #eSkills4girls, which are the result of the collaboration between governments, private sector, academia and civil society organizations:

> "If men alone are left to build technologies, half of the world's population is left out of the digital revolution".
>
> Zandile Keebine, Girlcode

- **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 STEM subjects as well as professions in the digital economy. With a study and a video, the initiative acknowledges women who work every day to challenge existing gender roles and stereotypes.

- **Setting up new networks to foster learning between grassroots initiatives**
  In May 2017, BMZ 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 further develop capacities and strategies for successfully running and scaling up initiatives related to girls digital skills development. As a result from the event, the #eSkills4Girls network has been established, continuing the dialogue among the tech leaders.

- **Strategic partnerships with the private sector to promote local innovations**
  Since 2015, BMZ is supporting **Africa Code Week**, which was initiated by the German Software Company SAP. Africa Code Week is a continent-wide digital literacy initiative reaching out to hundreds of schools, teachers, governments, businesses and non-profits. For the 2018 edition, for instance, the contribution of the BMZ to the ACW included the support of 21 coding workshops in 16 African countries with a curriculum specifically designed for the more than 8.000 participating girls and young women. Volunteer trainers and teachers introduced women and girls to the basics of coding using Scratch, a free visual programming language. Due to BMZ support, participation of the ACW is now almost equally representing 50% girls and 50 % boys.

- **An online platform to allow knowledge exchange**
  The **#eSkills4Girls** online platform showcases about **30 flagship projects** on digital skills, shares stories about female role models and bundles information about studies, data and events by different G20 partners.

- **Implementation of #eSkills4Girls projects**
  BMZ expands its portfolio with new projects and a special focus on #eSkills4Girls in Cameroon, Mozambique, South Africa and Rwanda with a total volume of 8 Mio. Euro. The projects focus on digital skills trainings for women and girls, the integration of digital technologies in vocational trainings and non-formal education setting and on raising awareness for career prospects in the technology sector.

- **The EQUALS partnership – Advancing gender equality in the digital age**
  #eSkills4Girls is just a first step to making the digital inclusion of women and girls a matter of course. It takes joint and long-term efforts by stakeholders from governments, private sector, civil society and academia. To this end, BMZ together with UNESCO has taken the lead of the Skills Coalition of EQUALS – a multi-stakeholder partnership to achieve gender equality in the digital age. The EQUALS Skills Coalition aims at ensuring that digital skills are taught to all children and girls in particular. The Coalition provides guidance to governments and other stakeholders **to make digital skills training available to girls and women throughout life**. The members work on improving the data base on women's digital skills, develop principles for gender-inclusive digital trainings and set up a digital skills fund supporting grassroots women leaders and activists to scale-up their digital skills projects.

ICT & Gender

ITU 2017 data shows that globally, the proportion of men who can write a computer program is twice that of females (7.8% versus 3.5%)
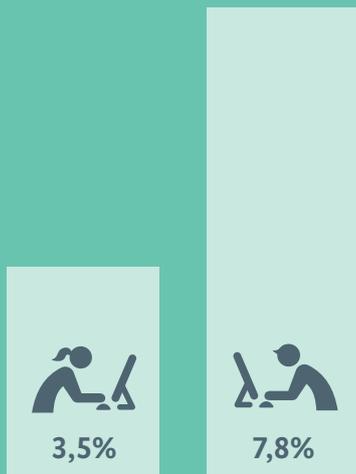
Occupying only 24% of all jobs in the IT industry worldwide and commanding just 15% of top-level positions women are still heavily under-represented in the digital economy.

Worldwide close to 75% of women online have been exposed to Cyber Violence.

3,5% **7,8%**

jobs in IT industry
24%

top-level positions
15%

cyber violence
75%

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More Information:

Women's Pathways to the Digital Sector:
Stories of Opportunities and Challenges

eSkills4Girls-Platform

BMZ-eSkills4Girls

EQUALS Partnership