

# Championing Digital Equality

Impact stories from  
Broadband Commissioners

International Women's Day  
8 March 2024

[broadbandcommission.org](https://broadbandcommission.org)

**BROADBAND COMMISSION**  
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT





# Setting the Stage

## The Global Gender Digital Divide

According to the latest ITU estimates, **70% of all men were using the Internet in 2023 compared to 65% of women**. Gender parity increased from 0.90 in 2019 to 0.92 in 2023. Some regions and income groups have achieved gender parity in Internet usage, including some among high-income countries, SIDS, Latin America and the Caribbean, CIS countries, and Europe.

However, despite increases in gender parity, women account for a disproportionate – and increasing – share of the global offline population. In fact, women now outnumber male non-Internet users by **17%, up from 11% in 2019**.

The Broadband Commission has been advocating for inclusive universal connectivity through its seven 2025 Broadband Advocacy Targets. **Specifically, Target 7 emphasizes that "gender equality should be achieved across all targets" by 2025**. This entails eliminating gender disparities in broadband policy, affordability, online access, skills development, e-finance, MSME connectivity, and more. By prioritizing gender equality within its advocacy efforts, the Commission aims to foster an environment where everyone can fully participate and benefit from the opportunities afforded by broadband connectivity.



**2025 Advocacy  
Target 7**  
**Bridge the  
Gender Digital  
Divide**





# Overview: Broadband Commission work on Gender

## 2013 Working Group

The 2013 Working Group on Broadband and Gender, chaired by UN Women and UNDP, presented conclusions and policy recommendations as a means of inspiring policymakers to consider this issue further and, ultimately, initiate action in:

- **Integrate gender and national ICT and broadband policies**
- **Improve sex-disaggregated ICT statistics** and measurement
- **Take steps to boost the affordability and usability** of ICT products and services
- **Improve relevant and local content online**
- **Initiate an Action Plan** to achieve gender equality in access to broadband by 2020

The Report also presents an approach to increasing the number of women in ICT careers: firstly, to create demand among girls and women for careers in ICT; secondly, to ensure a better supply of science, technology, engineering and maths education to girls and women; and thirdly, to achieve long-term sustainability by encouraging ICT businesses to attract, recruit, retain and promote women.

## 2017 Working Group

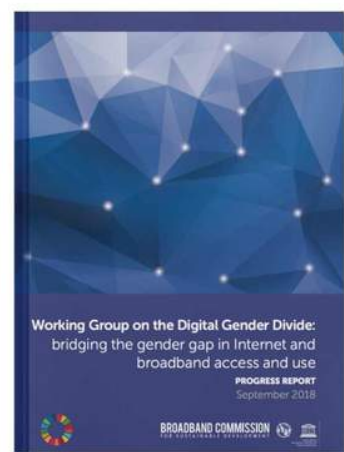
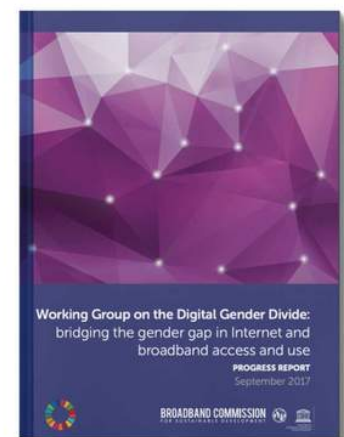
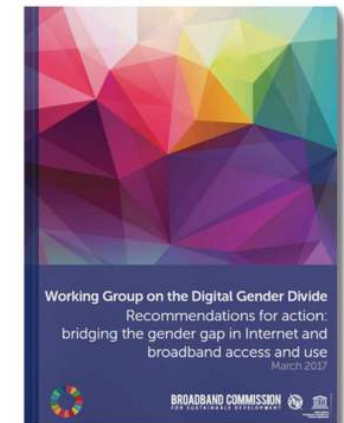
The 2017 Working Group on Gender Digital Divide, co-chaired by UNESCO and GSMA, highlighted key actions for closing the digital divide, which are still relevant today, including:

- **Compiling detailed evidence:** collect, analyze and track sex-disaggregated data to inform policy, particularly at a national and sub-national level, through a greater understanding of the issue.
- **Integrating policy:** integrate gender equality targets and key performance indicators into strategies, policies, plans and budgets, involving women and relevant local communities from the onset.
- **Addressing the barriers women face:** confront barriers that impede gender equality online, including affordable access; issues around safety; digital literacy and confidence; and the availability of relevant content, applications and services.
- **Supporting multi-stakeholder cooperation:** develop tools and policies to support national and international efforts, and effective sharing of best practices to address the digital gender gap.

These recommendations help clarify the complementary roles of different actors, including governments and policymakers, the private sector, inter-governmental organizations, NGOs, and academia and research institutions as the Working Group believes that the digital gender divide can only be bridged effectively by coordinated actions.

A progress report was published by this working group in both 2017 and 2018.

In addition to the Working Group reports explicitly focused on the issue of closing the gender digital divide, other Working Group reports also examine how prevalent issues affecting broadband policy, access, affordability, skills and use, impact women and girls and they provide with the best practices and tailored actions needed to address inequalities. Progress on Target 7 is tracked annually in the flagship State of Broadband Report.



# CST Building a network of women leaders



**H.E. Dr. Mohammed Saud Al-Tamimi**

*Governor of the Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST), Saudi Arabia*

Since the inception of the Kingdom's Vision 2030, Saudi women's contribution to the economy and participation in social development have witnessed a transformative journey leading to the rise of women leaders across the nation. Furthermore, women empowerment and inclusion lies at the heart of the Saudi ICT sector strategy, as a part of the kingdom commitment to empower women and bridge the gender digital divide.

The impact of our progress is significant noting that Saudi women's participation in the sector reached 35%, surpassing averages in the EU, G20, and Silicon Valley. Similarly, with 45% of the Kingdom's SMEs now led by Saudi women, the number of female-owned tech businesses has increased exponentially - especially following the Kingdom's Women Empowerment Program which has resulted in more than 23.6% ICT female leaders.

## **Aiming to accelerate women's participation globally in the telecommunication sector** ▶

While our efforts have been a catalyst of change in the Kingdom, there is still underrepresentation of women globally in the telecommunication sector. To address this issue, we have, jointly with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), launched "Building a Network of Women Leaders" - an initiative that reinforces the work initiated by the ITU-D's Network of Women (NoW) in 2021.

With a view to increase women's participation in the ITU, this initiative aims to create a cross-regional community of women to

- 1** ▶ improve women's participation in decision-making,
- 2** ▶ enhance female delegates' skills and capacities, and
- 3** ▶ enable women's contribution in gender-responsive policy formulation.

The program is already training ITU-D delegates on digital and managerial skills; establishing six regional NoW; and pairing 100 female delegates with 40 mentors, fostering an exchange of expertise and participation in professional networking platforms.

## **Realising Advocacy Target 7 and achieving inclusive universal meaningful connectivity** ▶

Throughout this program, we work closely with Member States on building a global network of women leaders based on the Kingdom's experiences and progress in gender inclusion in the ICT sector.

We are proud that this initiative reflects the concrete steps taken by the Kingdom toward a gender-inclusive ICT sector, advancing the Commission's Advocacy Target 7 on bridging the gender digital divide by 2025.







**Ms. Sima Sami Bahous**

*UN Under-Secretary-General  
and UN Women Executive  
Director*

Last year, the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) brought to our attention that progress towards gender equality in technology and innovation continues to be far too slow, across all indicators. And yet, the challenges that underpin the gender digital divide continue to be treated as a side topic in discussions on digitalization.

UN Women, through the convening of the Generation Equality Action Coalition Innovation & Technology for Gender Equality, is working on building consensus around concrete, actionable recommendations that can be endorsed to generate tangible impact to advance women's and girls' rights and empowerment in the digital age.

This has led to the publication of a new Position Paper "Placing Gender Equality at the Heart of the Global Digital Compact: Taking forward the recommendations of CSW67" to present practical ways to mainstream gender perspectives into digital cooperation negotiations. The Position Paper spotlights the key recommendations from the CSW67 that can be used and emphasized in the Compact, to set countries on paths that remove the current digital divides and build an inclusive digital future for everyone. It also recommends that all digital frameworks adopt a stand-alone goal on gender equality that elevates three fundamental topics to be prioritized in every dimension:

- 1** ▶ Freedom from technology-facilitated gender-based violence and discrimination
- 2** ▶ Equitable educational and economic opportunities
- 3** ▶ Equal voice, leadership and participation

The immediate result of this Position Paper is that it builds bridges between the communities of experts working on gender and emerging digital technologies. It provides a clear picture of what is at stake from a digital and gender perspective, what can be achieved through the Global Digital Compact, and show examples of stakeholders already taking gender-responsive action in this field.

The Position Paper also showcases that thanks to CSW67, ambitious agreed conclusions have been reached unanimously by Member States and that global consensus exists on many of the recommendations put forward. This will contribute to reinforcing political engagement in the negotiations and opening new pathways to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



*Image credit: UN Women/Ryan Brown*



# ITU Bridging the gender digital divide through coding



**Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin**

Secretary-General of ITU  
Co-Vice Chair of the  
Broadband Commission

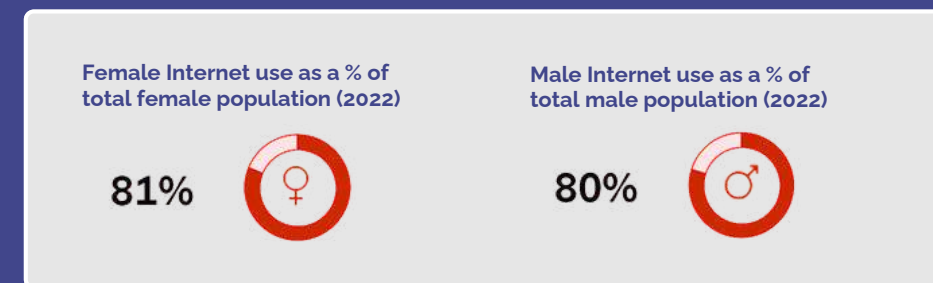
Giovana Soares De Amorim wasn't quite sure what she wanted to do after graduating from high school in her hometown of Francisco Sá, some 600 kilometers away from Brasilia. Participating in a coding course not only brought clarity — but transformed her from digital consumer to creator! Tech was never a priority for Giovana growing up. She had social media, but wasn't very active. She preferred to play mobile games, until her teacher introduced her to the Americas Girls Can Code (AGCC) initiative – where Giovana learned how to program games herself!

Inspired by African Girls Can Code, AGCC encourages girls from across the Americas to hone their digital skills by engaging them in programming, robotics, and other STEM activities. Part of ITU's work on closing the digital gender divide, AGCC also contributes to other initiatives such as International Girls in ICT Day and the EQUALS Global Partnership by inspiring girls and young women to pursue a career in STEM. More than 7,000 participants from 23 countries took part in AGCC workshops on topics ranging from digital career development to creating chatbots.

Giovana went on to major in Information Systems in college. What I love about Giovana's story is the ripple effect. She told her friends about Americas Girls Can Code, sparking their interest in STEM too — they even asked Giovana to create gaming apps for them!

***As an International Gender Champion, I'll never stop working to make sure girls like Giovana can learn and apply digital skills in ways that empower them and their communities.***

In Brazil, slightly more women than men use the Internet — 81% vs 80%, according to ITU's Digital Development Dashboard — bucking the global trend where women make up a disproportionate and growing share of the global offline population.



Source: [Digital Development Dashboard](#), ITU 2022

But the Brazilian tech sector, where women hold around 30% of jobs, tells a different story. In 2019, women represented roughly 13% of Brazil's computer science graduates. And just 4.7% of start-ups in Brazil were founded by women in 2020, with less than 0.5% of the country's total start-up funding going to companies founded by women that year.

In a world where emerging technologies like artificial intelligence are transforming life as we know it, and could affect 40% of jobs globally, digital skills are a must-have – especially for women and girls, who are not only more exposed but better poised to reap the benefits of AI.

**That's why, this International Women's Day, I'm calling on all stakeholders to dismantle the barriers that women and girls face to become users and shapers of scientific knowledge, digital technologies, and creators of a more inclusive, equitable digital world for all.**

Image credit: Giovana Soares De Amorim & ITU





# ITC The SheTrades Latam e-commerce project



**Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton**

*Executive Director, ITC*

## Charting a new course for women entrepreneurs ▶

The advent of e-commerce has opened new horizons for women entrepreneurs, who have often had limited opportunities to engage in international trade. But to take full advantage of these possibilities, they need **equitable access to technology, including e-commerce, to craft their economic futures.**

In Latin America, a joint programme by the International Trade Centre's SheTrades initiative and the ecomConnect programme is creating the conditions for a more inclusive digital environment. By working with regional service providers and business support organisations, women entrepreneurs are empowered to sell through online markets.

The programme is built on multiple pillars, from helping women develop new skills to creating a new community of peers. It brought together **1788 women-led businesses** from Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Uruguay, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama, along with eight local institutions looking to replicate the program in their home countries.

One of the programme's key elements was the ecomConnect Learning Programme (ELP), a self-paced e-learning training on e-commerce, paired with activities to help participants build their e-commerce skills. The ELP featured interactive modules and weekly virtual workshops, covering technical topics and soft skills. Participants also had access to a **community of experts and fellow entrepreneurs.** At the end of the programme, participants received an official certificate of completion.

## A competition and a celebration ▶

The programme culminated in a competition, where winning companies could share their success stories with over 200 fellow attendees. Among the winners were Cloth Industrial and Kyanita Accesorios from Colombia, Pandora Dolls from Uruguay, and Numen Blendería Patagónica from Argentina, who highlighted achievements ranging from better and more high-quality digital content to major boosts in local and international sales.

Winning companies received personalized support from ITC expert Carmen Gereá to continue optimizing their e-commerce businesses, such as through their e-commerce websites or by engaging on international marketplaces like eBay.

ITC consultant Janisse Pérez coached the entrepreneurs for their pitch presentations and confirmed that one of the most important outcomes was the increased self-confidence of participants, helping them channel their innovative ideas and leadership skills into their businesses. Looking to the future, Janisse said that

**Initiatives like these “are fundamental to promoting the inclusion and economic empowerment of women in Latin America.”**



*Image credit: ITC*



# FAO Digital Services Portfolio



**Dr. Qu Dongyu**

Director-General, FAO

The FAO [Digital Services Portfolio \(DSP\)](#) is a cloud based platform designed to disseminate information in the food and agriculture and related sectors and scale up agricultural services for smallholders and family farmers, fostering digital inclusion. It aims at making useful data and agricultural information available and accessible as digital services to rural communities, by providing them digital agriculture advisories that leverage the knowledge of Countries, FAO and strategic partners in the mobile world.

The DSP imports data and feeds it in a structured way, grouped into themes, with each theme addressing one distinct subject matter to the mobile devices of interested parties via a smartphone web app.

It is part of a wider Organizational effort aiming at promoting the shift towards digitalization and modernization in agriculture, through an efficient use of digital tools for major improvements in the food and agriculture sector in the field, making impact on the ground and leaving no one behind. It is meant to be a flexible platform for opportunities, reflecting the evolving nature of trends and needs in a fast-paced world where digitalization has become key, unleashing tremendous potential for development in the agricultural field and beyond.

In [Rwanda](#), in particular, where the DSP local version ([Hinga Worore](#), available on Google Playstore) was launched in 2017 as part of the first pilot countries to improve productivity and efficiency, the DSP is not only meant to increase production and incomes, but also to empower women, leaving no one behind.

*Image credit: Google Play Store: Digital Services Portfolio*

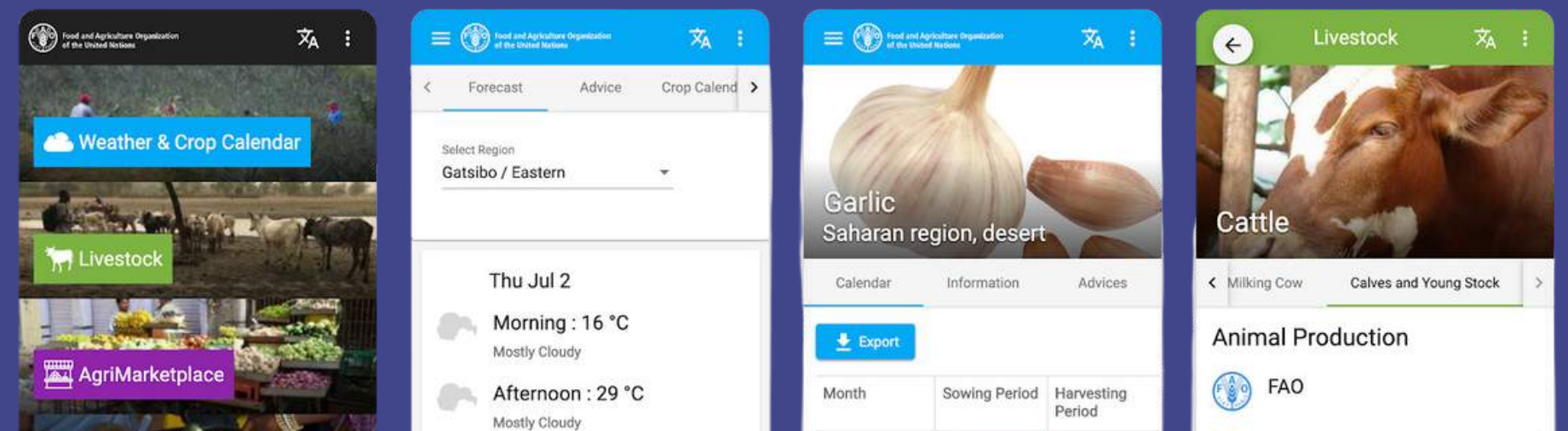
Even though some challenges still need to be tackled, such as the significant number of women farmers without smart phones who can benefit only in part from the DSP, a low digital literacy rate and internet costs that are still high, FAO Rwanda invites different partners to help farmers to turn these challenges around, by focusing also on the most vulnerable communities.

Under the One UN Rwanda Joint Project funded by the Peacebuilding Fund, FAO is playing a catalytic role in peace-building in Great Lakes by supporting the economic empowerment of women and youth in cross-border communities. Rwandan women farmers who are in agribusiness, selling food commodities in the Democratic Republic of Congo, were given pre-installed DSP smart phones and six-month internet bundles to facilitate their cross-border trade by adopting e-commerce practices and accessing information and knowledge available in the DSP for better production and market information.

Since 2019, FAO has trained and equipped 7 109 Rwandan women in agricultural digitalization - and its work continues. According to Rwanda's fifth population and housing census, more than 78.1 percent of the country's private households have a mobile phone. At least one member used the internet in the last 12 months in 22.8 percent of private households, while 69 percent of households nationally are engaged in agricultural activities (crop production or animal husbandry).

FAO Rwanda had trained 76 856 farmers as of September 2023 – 48.3 percent of them women and 51.7 percent men – from four anticipatory action projects: the digital skills and innovation capabilities for youth and women projects; the "Technical Assistance to the Sustainable Agriculture and Intensification Project (TA-SAIP)" and the "Creating opportunity for increased peace dividend for women and youth in DRC-Rwanda border region" project.

**There is hope that Rwanda's rapid digitalization progress will yield more results in closing the digital gender gap in the future.**







**Mr. Mats Granryd**

*Director General, GSMA*

**More women are digitally included than ever before.** Over 60% of women across low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) now use mobile internet, the primary – and often only – way most people go online; especially women.

Mobile internet use is transforming lives and helps empower women, making them feel more connected, autonomous, and safer and providing access to information, services and life-enhancing opportunities.

**Despite more people using mobile internet than ever before, there is a significant gender gap across LMICs.** While GSMA's latest data shows that the mobile internet gender gap in LMICs has narrowed from 19% in 2022 to 15% in 2023, it is not clear whether this trend will continue, and this gender gap remains substantial.<sup>1</sup>

**Targeted intervention is needed to better measure, understand and address the challenges that perpetuate the digital gender divide.**

The mobile industry, supported by the GSMA, continues to lead on advancing women's digital inclusion. As part of the GSMA Connected Women Commitment Initiative which launched in 2016, over 50 mobile operators have made formal commitments to accelerate digital and financial inclusion for women across Africa, Asia and Latin America. So far, they have collectively reached over 70 million additional women with mobile internet and mobile money services.

**50** Mobile operators committed to accelerating women's digital inclusion



**70** million women reached

Their efforts include:

- offering low-cost internet-enabled handsets;
- savings and loans products aimed at women;
- emergency balance and alerts to help women feel safer when using mobile phones;
- recruiting female agents and merchants;
- improving digital literacy among women through educational programmes and interactive content;
- helping women's agricultural groups see the benefits of mobile money for payments;
- improving the data top-up process to be safer and more appealing to women;
- creating mobile financial products for traditional women's savings groups;
- developing and marketing use cases which appeal to women; among others.



<sup>[1]</sup> GSMA (2024). Our new data shows the mobile internet gender gap has narrowed slightly, but there is still much work to be done.



# America Movil Connecting indigenous weavers



**Dr. Carlos M. Jarque**

*Executive Director,  
International Relations,  
Corporate and Government  
Affairs, America Movil*

*Focal Point for Broadband  
Commission Co-Chair, Mr.  
Carlos Slim*

In the heart of rural Mexico, nestled amongst underserved communities, there is a rich tapestry of tradition and skill - indigenous master weavers. These women pass down their knowledge of weaving to new generations, preserving their heritage. **But these weavers are more than artisans; they are agents of digital transformation** in a project led by America Movil, the GSMA and the WTO that aims to reduce poverty, empower women, and bridge the digital divide.

In these remote areas, where connectivity was limited or not existent, we introduced a solution: an offline version of the [Digital Education Platform, Aprende](#). Developed by The Carlos Slim Foundation, this platform provided free training in digital skills, digital marketing, e-commerce, export planning, and packaging.

America Movil donated tablets, preloaded with the app for offline use. In the heart of their towns, we trained these master weavers on how to use the device and navigate the platform. With the help of GSMA, who provided financial support to transport the women weavers to community centers, where free connectivity was available, we were able to provide uninterrupted training for three-month period.

The results were promising. WTO and local organizations reported almost 100% attendance during the face-to-face mentoring. Every participant completed at least one and a half courses, and some even managed to complete four. The allure of a platform certificate became a motivator to successfully pass the platform exams.

**The ripple effect of this project extended beyond the individuals involved. As the women interacted with others in their towns, they shared their newfound knowledge and skills, fostering a digital literacy movement within their communities.**

There was palpable eagerness among weavers to continue learning about e-commerce. Through the new use of digital technologies, weavers saw their income increase. Moreover, their digital inclusion extended to access to telemedicine and distance education, further improving their well being.

This project stands as a showcase of innovation, tackling the triple challenge of the infrastructure gap; the adoption gap and the relevant use gap. It serves as a testament to the transformative power of digital tools and connectivity in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are committed to replicating the program in other regions, ensuring its impact continues to reach more underserved communities.

Harnessing the power of digital technology, we have the potential to enhance the lives of all individuals, particularly women. **We can do it if we try, we can do it if we care.**

*In memory of Paula Garcia.*



*Image credit: The Aris Leoven Collection*



**Smart Africa**

## Smart Women and Girls Project



**Mr. Lacina Koné**

*Director-General, Smart Africa*

Smart Africa in its mandate has a vision to transform Africa into a single digital market by 2030. Through collaborative efforts with its member states, Smart Africa drives various projects and initiatives that synergistically work towards this goal.

Under the Smart Women and Girls project, Smart Africa launched a peer learning and mentorship platform during the 2023 Mobile World Congress in Kigali. **This platform supports and guides females in ICT fields, promoting their growth and success.**

Additionally, in partnership with Norwegian Agency for Development, Norad, Smart Africa will support young women entrepreneurs by providing personalized smart devices personalized to their business needs. By empowering these entrepreneurs with essential technological tools, Smart Africa aims to boost their ventures, contributing to economic empowerment and gender equality.



*Image credit: Getty Images Signature*





**Mr. Ralph Mupita**

CEO, MTN

**MTN purposefully operates to ensure that everyone deserves the benefit of a modern connected life, striving to achieve gender equality through ICT initiatives addressing inequalities prevalent across its operational areas.**

Particularly noteworthy is MTN Cote d'Ivoire (MTN CDI), which has demonstrated exceptional leadership in 2023 by implementing impactful ICT programs specifically targeting women and addressing the multifaceted challenges they face. In Côte d'Ivoire, UNICEF reports a significant disparity in digital skills between adolescent girls and young women compared to their male counterparts, with older women experiencing even greater discrepancies.

#JeParraineUneFille stands out as a notable initiative, focusing on **empowering 100 young mothers** through a back-to-school program. This initiative aims to enhance their digital literacy, increase access to online resources, and improve employability, thereby fostering economic empowerment and breaking the cycle of poverty. Similarly, AKWABA MOUSSO focuses on digitizing a centre that aids women affected by gender-based violence, ensuring that beneficiaries and staff have better access to information and resources. **By digitizing this facility, over 550 women are empowered to take control of their lives and make informed decisions.**

Another significant program, PME Rise, **provides support to 50 SMEs** (many who are female-owned), offering training in entrepreneurial skills, networking opportunities, and access to resources. This initiative has a ripple effect, benefiting over 350 individuals within these organizations, thereby contributing to the economic empowerment of women and overall community development. Meanwhile, MTN Boost'Her focuses on **training 50 female entrepreneurs in digital and e-commerce**, aiming to boost their productivity and market competitiveness. Through this program, participants received business coaching and increased visibility, leading to enhanced market presence and business success, ultimately benefiting 311 individuals within their companies.

MTN CDI's Foundation plays a strategic role in addressing gender inequality through connectivity, effectively bridging the digital divide and fostering lasting change.

**By empowering women with digital skills and resources, MTN aims to ensure equal access to the benefits of a modern, connected life thereby driving towards a more inclusive and equitable society for women.**

MTN remains committed to leveraging technology for social progress and empowerment, contributing to the advancement of women and reducing gender inequality.



Image credit: MTN



# Ghana Girls in ICT Initiative



**H.E. Mrs. Ursula Owusu-Ekufu**  
*Minister of Communications and Digitalisation, Ghana*

Despite Ghana's 2003 [ICT4D policy](#), aiming for widespread ICT literacy, millions remained untouched by technology, with significant disparities by region and gender.

Ghana adopted the Girls in ICT Initiative in 2012 to support the education of women and girls in ICT in line with the UN's SDG5. The Initiative was tailored to enhance digital skills, influence the choice of STEM-related courses and career choices, and develop critical thinking and research skills.

Participants of the initiative include Basic school pupils and secondary and tertiary students selected from marginalized communities.

The GIICT initiative in basic schools has been enhanced to include Training of Girls, Training of Teachers, Mentorship Sessions, Climax and Open Day Events.

Laptops with accessories are awarded to best-performing ICT teachers and 100 girls each, with the top ten (10) performing girls' schools receiving [cyber labs](#) and [cash prizes](#).

The [Open Day event](#) camps the best-performing 100 girls in Accra, the capital city, for one week interning with ICT-based companies.

They are exposed to practical knowledge and career opportunities by interacting with female mentors. The girls are given further training in AI, IoT, Machine Learning, robotics cybersecurity, Games/Animation and Website development using Scratch, Mobirise, Revolution Robotics Challenge kit and Arduino.



*Image credit: Vodafone Ghana*

## Impact ▶

Over the last decade, 57,031 girls drawn Nationwide at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels have been exposed to high-demand tech fields like AI, machine learning, website development, programming and IoT.

There has been increased interest in STEM and ICT careers among young women. Below is a summary of the number of girls and teachers trained from 2012 till date:



## Highlight ▶▶

Audrey Barkoh and Nana Yaa Yeboah used a computer in 2017 when the Girls in ICT team went to their Region for the [annual GIICT boot camp training](#). They were both fascinated by how the computer worked. They were determined to learn all they could. After two weeks of intense training, Audrey and her colleague could program a computer game. They both gained admission into the Senior High School and are both currently in the University pursuing programmes in Geomatic Engineering and Mathematics and Computer Science. They both serve as Mentors in the GIICT Mentorship events.



# Verizon Breaking through Tech



**Mr. Hans Vestberg**

CEO, Verizon Communications Inc.

The tech industry has long grappled with gender disparities, with the underrepresentation of women being a significant issue. Break Through Tech was created to address these disparities head-on through comprehensive training programs with the support of corporate sponsors and employers, including Verizon. Leveraging digital technologies for implementation, the initiative aims to bridge the gender digital divide, dismantle barriers by empowering women and propel them into careers in tech.

## The Problem ▶

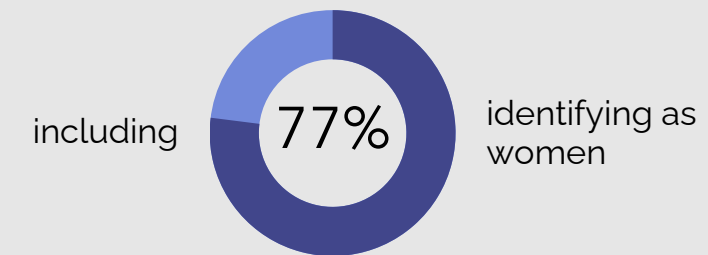
Women make up a small share of degree earners in tech, including engineering and computer science. These are the same areas where women are significantly underrepresented in the workforce. In 2021, Pew Research found that only 25% of computing jobs were held by women - a 7% decrease since 1990 and the same as 2016.

## Actions ▶

To address this challenge, Verizon and other corporations supported the growth of an initiative with Cornell Tech and the City University of New York. This initiative, Break Through Tech (BTT), offers programs in curriculum innovation, career access, and community building to help increase the number of women studying computing and entering tech careers. These programs include Guild, an introductory workshop in computing that inspires students to continue their computing education in college, and a "Sprinternship" program, a paid micro-internship program with preparatory technical and skills training helping students secure a paid summer internship.

## Impact ▶

**> 2,500** students have participated in BTT through 2023



**> 1,400** students have completed career access programs, including Sprinternships.

Beyond gaining professional skills, female participants report increased confidence and a sense of belonging due to new connections with other female students and professionals interested in technology.

Students who have participated in Sprinternships secure summer internships and jobs at a significantly higher rate compared to students who had not participated. Students who participated in Guild have gone on to take a computer science course in college.

Partner companies note that program participants are noticeably more prepared for their interviews and subsequent internships than students who have not completed the program.



Image credit: Verizon, Break Through Tech