

## **On International Girls in ICT Day, Graduate Women International urges States and educational institutions to encourage women and girls to learn how to code**

**Geneva, Switzerland, 27 April 2017** – [International Girls in Information and Communications Technologies \(ICT\) Day](#) reminds us that women and girls continue to be left behind in the ever-advancing technological industry. On this day, Graduate Women International (GWI) encourages worldwide cooperation to increase opportunities for women and girls to learn how to code.

The world today is an interconnected society and, despite barriers including poverty and gender, increasingly more people are able to search the boundless expanse of the internet and utilize mobile apps. Accordingly, the number of jobs and independent career choices in ICT are soaring – if you are a man. Startlingly, since the 1990s, the number of women computing professionals has actually [decreased](#), returning to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century levels. As the number of jobs in ICT increases, women are progressively underrepresented.

Patriarchal cultures surrounding the technological sciences thwart many women and girls' opportunity to advance in the ICT space. This gap also originates from the vast differences in technological exposure between young boys and girls. Early exposure to the field is critical for developing skills and interest in programming. GWI commends UNESCO's [YouthMobile](#) initiative that aims to provide young women with technical skills and the confidence to develop, promote and sell locally relevant mobile applications.

While none of the Sustainable Development Goals specifically focus on ICT careers, several targets make references to ICTs and technology. To aid in the successful achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 for quality education, GWI calls for governments and educational institutions to actively encouraged girls to study ICTs and increase opportunities for young girls to learn how to code. Coding is an increasingly valuable skill in today's labour market. Increasing the number of women in computing professions not only narrows the gender gap but encourages future generations to continue changing the stereotype.

GWI President, Geeta Desai, affirms that girls should to be actively encouraged to study ICTs to increase innovation and close the gender gap within ICT professions. "We live in a society dependent on science and technology and the time is now for women and girls to embrace ICT career paths and for global citizens to aid the effort," she adds.

Graduate Women International (GWI) is a membership-based international NGO based in Geneva, Switzerland, with presence in over 80 countries. Founded in 1919, GWI is the leading girls' and women's global organisation advocating for women's rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality education and training up to the highest levels. GWI is in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

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*This press release was written with the help of GWI intern Alex Albrecht.*