GRADUATE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL
ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

International Girls in ICT Day

25 APRIL 2024
CONTENTS

What is ICT?...........................................................1
ICT in Education...................................................1
ICTs, SDGs, and Peace........................................2
Barriers for ICTs...................................................3
Role of Girls in ICT Day.......................................3
Open Educational Resources............................4
Impact on Women and Girls..............................4
Best Practices in Mobile Learning....................5
Bridging the Digital Divide.................................6
Gender Sensitive Programmes.........................6
Role of Civil Society.............................................7
GWI Advocacy Resources....................................7
GWI’s Commitment.............................................8
Additional Resources..........................................9
2024 Event Map.................................................10
ICTs also play a crucial role in education. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has made integrating ICT into education an integral part of its efforts in ensuring equity in, and access to, quality education. In fact, ICTs offer a wide array of tools and resources enhancing learning outcomes and increasing access to, and the manipulation of, information. They facilitate personalized and tailored learning experiences as they cultivate critical thinking and digital literacy skills allowing for further efficiency and quality in education. UNESCO posits ICTs as crucial to deliver quality learning experiences, increase teacher’s professional development, and allow for more efficient education management, governance, and administration.
ICT, SDGS, AND PEACE

ICTs leverage technological innovation to address pressing global challenges and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly towards quality education.

They facilitate the dissemination of knowledge and resources essential for sustainable development. Through digital connectivity, ICTs promote inclusive growth and smart resource management. They also serve as a platform for global connectivity and social cohesion, providing the knowledge and skills needed to foster peaceful coexistence and peaceful conflict resolution. Including ICTs in development initiatives enhances a culture of collaboration and information sharing necessary in our conflict ridden society.
BARRIERS FOR ICT

Global Disparities
There are significant barriers to harnessing the full potential of ICTs for all aspects of sustainable development. Global disparities in infrastructure, affordability, and digital literacy hinder equitable access to ICT tools and resources, exacerbating inequalities. Comprehensive strategies must be implemented by States to address socio-economic disparities, promote investment in ICT infrastructure and literacy, and provide targeted support to marginalized communities. Women and girls comprise an important segment of the population facing disadvantages in regards to ICTs and digital literacy.

Gender Gap
Women are strongly under-represented in, and nearly absent from, many STEM fields, such as software development, engineering, technology research, etc. Additionally, women who are present in these fields tend to leave these jobs at higher rates than men (Source: ITU). In fact, they also often find themselves in junior and supporting roles rather than leadership positions, often with little possibility for advancement. This year’s Girls in ICT theme is ‘Leadership’. It aims to address the representation of women in these technological fields and expose young girls to women in leadership positions to break down gender stereotypes and biases.

ROLE OF GIRLS IN ICT DAY

This day works to break down deeply engrained beliefs that women are less apt in technological fields, and the stereotypes portraying ICT fields as male-dominated. These prejudices discourage women and girls from pursuing such careers and need to be dismantled as early as possible (Source: ITU).
Education plays an intrinsic role in breaking down stereotypical gender expectations and roles. Introducing initiatives in education promoting digital literacy and normalising the use of ICTs can create an environment where these fields become more accessible to these historically underrepresented groups, such as women and girls.

Moreover, ICTs provide novel educational opportunities for women and girls. In fact, Open Educational Resources (OER) are publicly accessible, no-license, no-cost, teaching, learning, and research materials that are aimed at reducing accessibility barriers to educational resources.

IMPACT OF OER ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

These resources are vital for women who do not have the means, especially financial, to take part in traditional education. Additionally, they accommodate the unique needs and responsibilities of women, such as caregiving or household chores as they provide much flexibility.

ICTs allow for the creation, distribution, and utilization of these OER on a global scale. The existence of these OER demonstrates the importance of ensuring women and girls everywhere are digitally literate and can take advantage of these resources.
In Rwanda, the Ministry of Education implemented the SMART Classroom initiative under its ICT in Education Master Plan to reach all schools by 2020.

**BEST PRACTICES IN MOBILE LEARNING**

Over 1/2 of all schools in Rwanda are now equipped with ICT devices and many teachers have undergone capacity-building initiatives to make better use of ICT in teaching and learning.

---

**United Kingdom**

In the UK, over the last ten years, the Denbigh school has developed an innovative whole school technology for learning strategy incorporating mobile learning for both staff and pupils. This involves a variety of programs to promote inclusive use of ICTs.

‘Apps for Good’ is an example of course that has been delivered for the past five years as an after-school club for grades 8 and 9. This programme has successfully had an equal participation of girls and boys!
BRIDGING THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE

Bridging the gender digital divide is crucial for ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities and fostering inclusive development. By addressing these disparities, we can empower women and girls to fully participate in educational systems and benefit from digital learning resources. Closing the gap promotes equal opportunities for girls to acquire ICT skills, pursue STEM fields, and access online educational content.

GENDER-SENSITIVE PROGRAMMES

EQUALS, an ITU initiative, has been working on a Gender Digital Inclusion Map, which interactively maps where initiatives regarding the inclusion of women and girls in ICT are being undertaken. This project is a platform to collect and disseminate information.

ELSA, which stands for Early Learning STEM Australia, is a program that provides the opportunity for young children to explore play-based environments rich in STEM concepts, aiming to develop children’s spatial reasoning skills and numeracy development.

WOMEN’S NET is a networking support programme designed to enable South African women to use the internet to find the people, issues, resources and tools needed for women’s social action. It aims to teach women to use ICTs to advocate for their rights.

CODIGO X, from the Mexican National Digital Strategy, organises free workshops and conferences for girls and women on digital literacy, robotics and programming. Along with hackathons for high school students showing the different possibilities offered by technological careers.

Join a GWI affiliate today at www.graduatewomen.org

© 2024 Graduate Women International
ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society organization advocating for gender equality and education play a pivotal role in fostering opportunities for women and girls in the ICT industry. As shown in the previous case studies, these organizations are often behind the capacity-building programmes and mentorship initiatives enhancing girls’ digital literacy and ICT skills.

Additionally, through advocacy and awareness campaigns civil society can raise visibility around the digital gender gap, challenging stereotypes and barriers deterring girls from pursuing ICT education and careers.

GWI has always been committed to reducing the gender digital divide, redoubling in efforts over the last decade seeing as society’s rapid technological advancements are not benefitting women and girls proportionally.

GWI ADVOCACY RESOURCES

Click here for our National Federation and Associations’ (NFA) grassroot initiatives.

2020 Girls in ICT Day
Infographic

2021 Women & Girls in Science
Infographic

2022 Young Member Network
Webinar

2024 Women & Girls in Science
Infographic
Civil society can also leverage their influence on policy by facilitating community and stakeholder engagement to strategize on promoting girls’ involvement in ICT and further advocating for more inclusive and gender sensitive digital policies, especially in education.

GWI has done this by calling member states and other stakeholders to action through policy resolutions dating back to 1959:

- **1959** - No.15: Women in New Professions
- **1962** - No. 10: Girls & Careers
- **1965** - No. 10/15: Women & Science Teaching & Employment
- **1980** - No. 16: Science & Math Education
- **1983** - No. 8: Computer Literacy
- **1995** - No. 4: Career Development
- **2001** - No. 2: The Future of Women’s Employment
- **2010** - No. 2: Numeracy and Women
- **2019** - No.4: Women & STEM
- **2022** - No.1: Funding for Digital Learning
In the last decade, GWI has been calling upon society as a whole to address the gender divide through various accessible press releases encouraging women and girls to participate in these fields more, click on the boxes below to read these press releases:

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Every year, ITU organises awareness campaigns, workshops, and global celebrations for this day. Click on the image here for this year’s social media toolkit. **Click here for the Girls in ICT website.**
Additionally, UNESCO is one of the main agencies working to promote ICTs in education, ensuring equitable access to quality education worldwide. UNESCO has published a variety of guidelines, master plans, and frameworks, to support countries in integrating ICT in their educational curricula. Below some notable examples.

2024 EVENT MAP

Click on this map to find events near you for this year’s Girls in ICT Day!

Join a GWI affiliate today at www.graduatewomen.org
Graduate Women International (GWI)

Empowering women and girls through lifelong education since 1919

GWI thanks intern, Sophia Schaaper, for her exceptional work on this toolkit.