

Active contribution toward closing gender gap in tech

Siemens and UN Women to train young African women in ICT, coding and further digital literacy skills

- **Cooperative project to train more than 600 young women from five countries in Africa in ICT, coding, leadership and communications skills, in the context of the African Girls Can Code Initiative**
- **Siemens to make €780,000 available in the form of hardware, IT training materials and technical assistance to enhance young girls' access to jobs and employment opportunities**
- **UN Women Liaison Office to African Union (AU) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to coordinate activities under the umbrella of „African Girls Can Code Initiative“**

Siemens AG and UN Women Germany committed to jointly support the implementation of the African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI), an Africa continental program which aims to provide comprehensive training in information and communication technology (ICT) as well as coding and leadership skills to girls and young women in Africa. In this connection, the partners emphasized the vital role education plays in addressing gender inequalities and accelerating the empowerment of women and girls. The project's target group comprises young women aged 17 to 25 from Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda. Within two years, as many as 625 young women will benefit from the partnership; all offerings are free of charge for the participants. By 2023, Siemens will initially provide €500,000 for this cause and will support two-week, full-time coding camps in the five countries with digital literacy, programming as well as personal development skills. Specifically, the coding camps will cover topics such as robotics, the Internet

of Things, animation, 3D printing, gender equality and women's empowerment, leadership, and communications.

In addition, the company will provide laptops with a total value of over €280,000 to all participants. Five UN Women Country Offices in partnership with relevant government sector ministries and other key stakeholders including Civil Society Organizations and the private sector will coordinate the implementation of the project.

Elke Ferner, chair of UN Women Germany, said: "It's great that, together with Siemens, we're breaking new ground when it comes to education for young women in Africa and that this technology company is doing pioneering work here. Collaborative projects like this one are essential for enabling young African women to develop future-oriented competencies in a protected environment. At both the national and international levels, taking a stand for women's rights and for educational equality is a societal duty for all of us."

"I'm particularly pleased that we'll be supporting this important UN Women initiative with our knowhow. Here, we're making a difference by contributing the expertise Siemens has in the areas of IT, cybersecurity and tailored training materials as well as our local know-how through our regional company in South Africa," explained Judith Wiese, Chief People and Sustainability Officer and member of the Managing Board of Siemens AG. "By doing this, we want to give young women in Africa a chance to enter a future-oriented job market while offering them a path to financial independence."

IT and cybersecurity experts from Siemens will provide technical assistance to implementation of the project activities in the different countries. In addition to the two-week training sessions, Siemens proposes to provide four- to six-month programs for advanced training in low-code programming.

Sabine Dall'Omo, CEO of Siemens in Southern and Eastern Africa, commented: "The African continent offers enormous potential. I'm very pleased, that we're teaming up with UN Women to undertake concerted and systematic action to create

opportunities for development, in particular for girls and young women, and to thus actively address the disadvantages they face.”

The African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI) that UN Women called to life in 2018 is a four-year program that aims to train girls and young women between 17 and 25 years of age to become computer programmers, developers and designers and to empower them to begin university studies and a career in the ICT sector.

Through the roll out of the second phase of the initiative that commenced in January 2022, UN Women is driving this initiative in partnership with the African Union Commission and the International Telecommunication Union with support from the Government of Belgium and Siemens AG targeting 10 countries. Under AGCCI, partnerships with local stakeholders such as NGOs, ICT research and academic institutions aim to sustain opportunities to digital trainings and access to digital platforms to accelerate young women’s employability and contribution to Africa’s development across sectors.

The initiative further strengthens the building of a strong personal network in which the young women motivate and support each other and possibly implement joint entrepreneurial ventures. It also supports the development and roll out of an online platform to facilitate mentorship, training, job opportunities, and the promotion of innovative programmes developed by beneficiaries.

“I’m very proud to be able to support this initiative and drive its development – in particular in light of my dual responsibilities for cybersecurity and diversity,” said Natalia Oropeza, Chief Cybersecurity Officer and Chief Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Officer at Siemens AG. “My responsibilities bring together many topics that are of enormous importance today: technology, IT, cybersecurity, education and diversity. Supporting young women in obtaining an adequate education and in advancing their personal development is a decisive factor for a sustainable future – and that’s not only the case in Africa, but also worldwide.”

Awa Ndiaye-Seck, UN Women Special Representative to AU and UNECA, noted: “As UN Women, we recognize that AGCCI is catalytic and not a panacea to bridge the gender gap in digitization. If we have to scale up this and similar initiatives, we

urgently need to forge and nurture multi-sectoral and multi-level partnerships that aim to address not only the policy level bottlenecks related to access to technology and finances but also the gender based harmful norms and practices that hinder women and girls from pursuing STEM fields.”

Hanna Hennig, Chief Information Officer of Siemens AG, added: “According to UNESCO, women and girls are 25 percent less likely than men to know how to use digital technologies for basic purposes. Enabling women to gain extensive access to technology is a matter of equal rights. We’ve already had very positive experiences with our coding camps in Germany and other countries. I’m very enthusiastic about the plans for joining forces with UN Women to enable young women in Africa to acquire such vital knowledge. This partnership has the potential to develop transformative impact.”

This press release is available at <https://sie.ag/3LcdPHM>

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About UN Women Germany e.V.

UN Women Nationales Komitee Germany e.V. is a non-profit association and one of 12 national committees worldwide that support the work of “UN Women” on gender equality and the empowerment of women through public relations and fundraising at country level. www.unwomen.de

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