

## **Concept note: Connected African Girls, Coding Camp**

**5 - 16 JULY 2021**

### **Background**

In order to advance the ICT skills within Africa, and bridge the digital gender divide across the continent, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in collaboration with partners, are jointly organizing the Connected African Girls, coding camp which will be hosted on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July, at an innovation-camp location in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Simultaneously, an online virtual platform will be accessible to reach girls and young women throughout Africa.

Technology dominates our lives yet the proportion of females to males who graduate with STEAM related degrees is significantly smaller. Only 35 per cent of STEAM students in higher education globally are women, and differences are observed within STEAM disciplines. For instance, globally only 3 per cent of female students in higher education choose information and communication technologies (ICT) studies. Women continue to be under-represented in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM). With the lowest rate of Internet penetration, the African region has the widest digital gender gap in the world with only 22.5 per cent of women using the Internet, compared with 33.8 per cent of men.

The COVID-19 has acted to exacerbate existing inequalities and vulnerabilities raising renewed concerns about the gender digital divide. Leveraging from past success from the UN@75 celebrations, whereby UNECA in partnership with the ITU hosted a Hybrid Continental Coding Camp in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and the African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI) at the 53rd session, this Connected African Girls coding camp seeks to continue the momentum towards promoting an interdisciplinary approach to learning and skills development that transcends throughout cognitive fields and focuses on addressing authentic, real-world problems by means of the complex use of technological tools.

### **Objective**

More needs to be done to ensure young girls have access to STEAM at a young age. The Connected African Girls, coding camp, will provide the necessary technology education and skills to young women and girls to promote Africa's integration, generate inclusive economic growth, stimulate job creation, break the digital divide, and eradicate poverty for the continent's socio-economic development and ensure Africa's ownership of modern tools of digital management.

## **I. Expected Outcomes**

It is expected that the coding camp will accomplish the following:

- Empower learners with technical and soft skills so that they can thrive in an ever-evolving digital technology industry (knowledge and skills for digital literacy, coding and personal development skills);
- Provide the right foundation to find long-term success in employment, entrepreneurship or further education.;
- Create an environment that builds meaningful partnership for improvement to inspire, meaningful partnerships, establish synergies, build confidence. (build network, woman empower;
- Promote entrepreneurship through digital technology (encourage leadership and confidence;
- Promote access to ICT.

## **II. Target Audience**

For the period of two weeks, the Connected African Girls, Coding Camp will be exclusively dedicated to Africa's girls and young women aged between 12yrs to 25yrs. The camp aims to bring together 200 girls to the Yaoundé, Cameroon innovation camp, and simultaneously streamed to allow girls from the rest of Africa to join and participate virtually. To be more inclusive the training content would be bilingual (both in French and English).

## **III. Trainers**

The camp will be run by ten world-class trainers.

## **IV. Programme and Course Content**

In the said camp the girls capacitated in the following areas:

- Technical skills in the areas of 3D Printing, Animation, Gaming & Web Development, Turtle Stitch, Robotics & IoT, Fashion, Design Thinking, Computational Thinking, Computer Science, and Cybersecurity.
- Soft skills in Confidence Building, Gender, Agenda 2063, UN SDGs, Human Rights, Public Speaking, and Project Pitching.

During the two weeks of the coding, camp girls would have an opportunity for a field trip to different innovation hubs in their respective countries and get mentored by various role models and leaders in the STEAM field from Africa.

The last two days of the first week would be dedicated to rotational classes on different learning tracks: AI, Robotics and IOT, Gaming and Web Development, Turtle Stitch (i.e., coded embroidery) and Animation.

The fashion and Art learning track would be a general class given to all the girls. The aim was for all the girls to attend all the four learning technical tracks and have an introductory session in each class and thereafter they would be able to select a learning track for the second week, which they will be studying and create projects.

At the end of the camp, the Girls will then form themselves into groups and work on solving a community challenge and come up with an innovative solution to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

The closing ceremony and innovation fair will be held on the 2nd of July 2021. The innovation fair aims to showcase and run demonstration of all the projects designed to be presented by the trainee girls. There will be a panel of judges to evaluate their projects and prizes to be awarded. Upon successful completion of the coding camp, the girls are presented with a certificate.

## **V. Expected Outcomes**

Some of the expected outcomes from running the camps are:

- Create meaningful partnerships with local and regional stakeholders which includes innovation hubs, academia, and private sector;
- Showcase innovations and projects that are done by these young innovators;
- Create national and regional attention on girls, ICTs, and coding through media campaigns;
- Promote the mainstream of ICTs, gender, and coding into the national curricula;
- Build a mentorship program;
- Promote the dedicated website for the coding camp which allows to keep track of Trainees progresses, and allow communication between Trainees, Trainers and Role models. Besides, the Platform could be used as a one-stop knowledge hub for the coding camp.

## **VI. Date and Venue**

The event will be held from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2021.

- Cameroon venue TBA.
- Girls from the rest of Africa would be joining and participating virtually

Registration Link: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_RYEjE364Som0VRaTfopkLw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RYEjE364Som0VRaTfopkLw)