

GirlCode to launch incubator programme, digital academy in 2018

2018 will see GirlCode expand its annual hackathon and training workshops, as well as launch its Digital Academy, the GirlCoder Club, the GirlCode Accelerator Programme, and the GirlCode Incubator initiative.



The social enterprise aims to impact 10 million females across Africa by 2030, through strategic partnerships, training initiatives, and mentorship and networking programmes

Addressing the gender gap

According to the Intel *Women and the Web* report, nearly 25% fewer women are online than men. In sub-Saharan Africa, the gap rises to 43%. And McKinsey reports that women comprise just 16% of all executive-level positions at technology companies in Africa.

Says Zandile Keebine, GirlCode founder: “We have to be intentional in our efforts and committed to bringing opportunities to girls in rural areas and disadvantaged communities. Technology is increasingly becoming part of our lives, making digital literacy fundamental for everyone. With half the population being female, if we don’t start upskilling girls today, it means we’re leaving half of our potential IP out of the solutions we should be creating. It’s not enough for girls to simply play with technology; we have to encourage them and give them the chance to understand, create and work with it.”

Plans for 2018

- Expansion of the annual hackathon to Cape Town and Durban in addition to the long-standing Johannesburg event. Next year’s hackathon will be hosted from 3-5 August 2018, and girls will be encouraged to solve challenges for SMEs and orphanages. The winning team will be sent to the Women in Tech Conference, in Amsterdam. Corporates will also be able to white-label hackathon events and tap into female tech talent and knowledge to solve business problems.
- Expansion of the GirlCode workshops, which provides girls with valuable skills training in everything from HTML and Java to presentation skills, design thinking, and Wordpress, in the run-up to the hackathon.
- The launch of the Digital Academy, which will provide unemployed women who have had no or little exposure to technology with basic computer skills training, as well as CV and interview guidance, over two weeks. The goal is to

broaden their skills so that they can broaden their job opportunities.

- The launch of the GirlCoder Club, which will teach high schoolgirls how to code in weekend classes facilitated by unemployed Computer Science graduates.
- The launch of a 10-month GirlCode Accelerator programme, which will give girls the opportunity to gain real-world experience, be bridging the gap between academic learning and work-ready skills. The initial intake will be 30 girls.
- The launch of the GirlCode Incubator, a 24-month mentorship programme focusing on marketing, operations, innovation, finance and self-mastery, to help girls grow their businesses.
- Quarterly speed dating sessions between girls and mentors in the industry, in an effort to expand their networks.

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