# African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI) Second Phase Launch and TOT

## APRIL 25–28 2022

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# INTRODUCTION

The African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI) was commissioned by UN Women and the African Union Commission (AUC) in collaboration with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The African Union Commission (AUC) through the Departments of Social Affairs now known as AU-Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS), the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD) and the Human resource, Science and technology department now known as Education, Science, Technology & Innovation (ESTI) provide technical support to this initiative which aims to train and empower a minimum of 2000 young girls aged between 17-25, across Africa to become computer programmers, creators and designers, placing them on track to take up studies and careers in the information, communication and technology (ICT), education and coding sectors. The initiative has two key strategies namely: coding camps and mainstreaming ICT, coding and gender into the national curricula. Moreover, it promotes the implementation of national media campaigns involving role models (e.g. women in ICT, female teachers in schools) and utilizes an on-line platform to enhance networking among the girls, trainers and mentors.

UN Women, AUC, ITU, UNECA, and partners, with financial support from the Government of Belgium will thus implement the second phase of AGCCI which aims to support the coordination of the project activities in five selected countries Burundi, Niger and Mali, Tanzania and Mozambique. More concretely, the partnership will support the organization of 10 coding camps in the five countries (2 camps per country) bringing together young girls of 17-25 years for a two-week training. The partnership will further support the AGCCI online platform with new content, additional functionalities and increased capacity which will help girl coders to continuously update their skills and connect with a supportive online community to share ideas and opportunities.

Against this background the partners organized the first of the 2nd phase activities- Training of Trainers (TOT) from April 25-27 in Dar es Salam Tanzania which was followed by the official launch of the second phase on April 28th 2022.

# TRAINING OF TRAINERS

The Training of Trainers (TOT) took place between April 25-27 at White Sand Hotel in Dar es Salam, Tanzania. The three-day programme aimed to create a pool of trainers from the 11 AGCCI priority countries (5 covered under the Government of Belgium fund and 6 additional countries) for the second phase namely: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda who will provide trainings in the national coding camps in their respective countries.

UN Women in close consultation with AUC technical experts designed a training curriculum with the overall aim of developing a standardized training module which will be implemented at national level.

62 Trainees of Trainers were mobilized and selected through the UN Women country offices based in the 11 priority countries through a competitive process and received the training.

The opening was moderated by one of the trainers who invited to the podium representatives from the Government of Tanzania- Mr. Samson Nwela, Director of Knowledge Management, Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, from UN Women Tanzania- Ms. Hodan Addou, Country Representative and from the Government of Belgium- Ambassador Peter VanAcker, Representative of Government of Belgium in Tanzania.

## Ahead of the training, the trainers developed:

- A pre-training assessment form- which was disseminated to all trainees
- An outline of the training manual- which partners reviewed and contributed to and;
- Training slides which aided the 3-day training

The 3 day training covered an array of components such as: Design Thinking, Next Gen Technology, Robotics, Introduction to UI and UX, Mobile Development with MIT App Inventor, Web Development, Gender and How to Inspire Young Women in Tech. Trainees were also briefed on AU learn- a Learning Management System (LMS) aimed at providing a reliable, relevant, user-friendly and inclusive eLearning solution that is accessible to all AU Learners. This platform offers the AU Youth Engagement Toolbox and the Women Empowerment Toolbox, packages for the orientation and activation of youth and women to solve Africa's challenges and achieve the 7 Aspirations of Agenda 2063. The UN Women Special Representative to AU and ECA- Ms. Awa Ndiaye Seck formally closed the Training of Trainers Workshop on April 27 2022. The trainees I expressed commitment to the implementation of AGCCI at national level.

Following the successful completion, the trainers are tasked to finalize the training module based on the inputs from trainees as well as technical focal points from the partners agencies. Trainers have also disseminated a post training assessment to trainees which will form part of the bigger TOT report.

# RECOMMENDATIONS (FROM TRAINERS)

**1** There is a need to provide AGCCI participants with the robot kits during the Robotics & AI session of the 2 weeks coding camp taking place at national level.
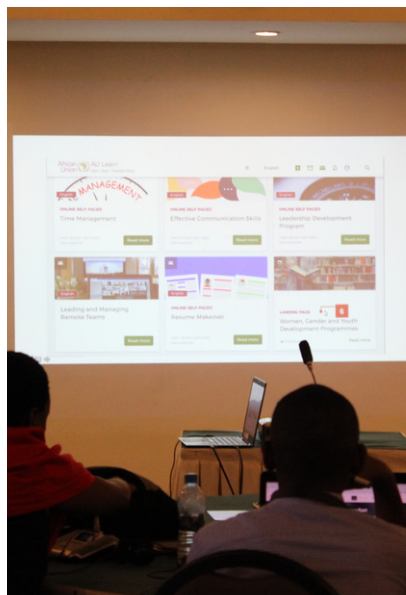
**2** Quality Internet connectivity is required for hands on training in :

a. Introduction to Computer Science (Learning programming concepts using scratch)

b. Robotics with mBot Ranger

c. Mobile App development with MIT App inventor

d. Website development with Google Blogger

Hence, it is highly recommended that internet quality be determined ahead of the training. In addition, there should be backup internet available.

**3** The below installation files should be downloaded and pre-installed on participants work stations ahead of coding camps:

a. Scratch: https://scratch.mit.edu/download

b. mblock: https://mblock.makeblock.com/en-us/download/

# AGCCI 2ND PHASE LAUNCH

The launch of AGCCI's second phase took place at Hayat Regency hotel in Tanzania Dar es Salam on April 28th which coincided with the International Girls in ICT Day. The hybrid launch gathered 150 stakeholders in person and over 70 participants virtually from the AUC, the Government of Tanzania and Belgium, UN agencies, private sector, AGCCI Alumni and members of media.

The event was opened by high-level representatives from the UN Women East and Southern Regional Office (ESARO)- Ms. Zebib Kavuma, Deputy Regional Director, UN Tanzania- Mr. Zlatan Milisic, Resident Coordinator (RC), Government of Belgium- Ambassador Francois Dumount, Head of Mission and Permanent Representative to the AU, IGAD and UNECA and Representative to Ethiopia and Ambassador Van Acker Peter- Representative to Tanzania, AUC, HHS- Mr. Bryan Tumusiime and the guest of honor from Tanzania Minister for Community, Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups (Mainland)- Hon. Dr. Dorothy Gwajima.

**Ms. Kavuma** on behalf of UN Women ESARO's Regional Director **Mr. Maxime Houinato** stated that the gender and STEM agenda is timely and an urgent priority.

She underlined that there are few but salient issues that thread across the different parts of our continent as factors that curtail women and girls' participation in the STEM field including:

**1** Family responsibilities;

**2** Societal patriarchal attitudes and;

**3** Unconducive work environments and remuneration which women must overcome including biased stereotypes about their competence.

Thus, **Ms. Kavuma** affirmed that it is a priority for UN Women to address the gender digital divide through initiatives such as the AGCCI, which is a catalytic continental initiative that advances women and girls' access to and their participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, training and research activities at all levels. She concluded with a call to action to partners to design, identify and promote programmes that are sustainable, gender responsive and alert to the barriers as well as dangers women face online and offline.

**Mr. Milisic**, UN Tanzania's RC reiterated that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the great potential that the spread of information and communication technology has in improving social and economic dynamics which can accelerate human progress and called on civil society, governments, development community and private sector- to ensure equal opportunities to education, tackle discrimination and stereotypes and empower young girls towards achieving the aspiration of the SDGs. He highlighted that **increased investments** are also required to guarantee the safety of women and girls online, and to broaden the evidence base and availability of data for adolescent girls' access to and use of digital technology.

Representatives from the Government of Belgium **Ambassador Dumount** and **Ambassador Peter** discussed that Technology can be a powerful tool for girls' voices to become even louder and reach further. Amb. Peter detailed that giving girls the tools to make it work best for them, to create technological solutions with the needs of women in mind, and to open up greater social and economic opportunities for them can make a significant difference in joint efforts to ensure a more gender equal and sustainable world. **Amb. Dumount** further asserted that gender equality has been a long-standing priority for the Government of Belgium and stressed that **"only together can we overcome the obstacles towards sustainable development".**

**Mr. Tumusiim** speaking on behalf of **Mme. Cisse Mariama Mohamed**, Director-Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, acknowledged **AGCCI as a key pillar and cornerstone to the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage and the Saleema Initiative to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation.** He proceeded, stating that the second phase greatly resonates with the much-needed actions to End Harmful Practices by acting as a pivot to empowering girls with the necessary tools and skills for their competitive advantage in a predominantly male industry. **Mr. Tumusiim** underscored that AGCCI equally mirrors both campaigns' strategic directions for accelerating critical access to education for empowerment of African Girls as espoused by the continental and global commitments.

The guest of honor **Hon. Dr. Gwajima**, ahead of announcing the official launch of the second phase, remarked that the digital revolution brings immense potential to improve social and economic outcomes for women. She shared that Tanzania has signed various international treaties and committed to co-lead the Global Generation Equality (GE) Forum Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights aimed at enhancing and accelerating the empowerment of women. She informed that a National Advisory Committee was established in 2021 to oversee the implementation of GE Action Coalition which will work to scale-up investment in educational programs for girls including the establishment of girls' science schools, technology hubs and vocational training centers in all regions of the country.

**She upheld that the Government of Tanzania remains committed to ensuring through the implementation of the National Development Plans its efforts to advance gender equality and provide equal opportunities to better the lives of all women and girls in the country**. Before concluding her remark, **Dr. Gwajima** commended the Belgium government for their support and called on other development partners to also join this initiative, to enable the scaling up of the programme and expand the number of girls that will benefit from it.

The event also included presentation by UN Women on the second phase by Ms. Awa Ndiaye Seck and commitments from all partner agencies- WGYD, ESTI through the AU International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), ITU, UNICEF, UNESCO and UNECA.

**Dr. Rweyemamu-**WGYD Head of Division for Gender Policy and Development stated AUC's commitment to scaling up efforts for AGCCI during its second phase. She acknowledged the success by all partners during the first phase, which was launch in 2018 and trained 600 girls with digital skills, developed a gender and ICT mainstreaming guide into national curricula as well as established an e-learning platform.

**Dr. Rweyemamu** completed her intervention by proposing, **challenge for young girls and women to create products that facilitate business processes and products that pose as solutions to challenges in their communities; challenge to partners to create more initiatives that empower young women and girls in the STEM sector- that bring them in and keep them within the sector**. She called on all stakeholders to keep this momentum and keep pushing for the increased participation of young women and girls in the STEM sectors.

AU/CIEFFA's Programme Coordinator **Mr. Boubakar Yougbare** on behalf of **Dr. Rita Bissoonauth**- AU/CIEFFA Head of Mission, shared that two years ago, Africa's education systems were seriously disrupted by COVID-19, leaving many learners out of school and unable to continue their education. During this period of school disruptions, many African Union Member States started digital, and ICT based distance learning as strategies to ensure continuity of learning for their learners **Mr. Yougbare** shared. He further stated that the diversion to ICT based distance learning is also in response to the initial efforts by the AUC in providing guidance through policy guidelines for digital technology use in education, putting into action the AU Digital Transformation Strategy. However, **Mr. Yougbare** highlighted despite these actions, implementation continues to be difficult and with varying degrees of disparities on the continent.

**Mr. Yougbare** asserted that the AU/CIEFFA in its new Strategic Plan 2021 - 2025 and through its mandate to promote and advocate for girls' and women's education on the continent- has put strategic emphasis on building the resilience of girls and women in a number of key areas such as:

| **Key areas:** |
| --- |

- STEM and skills development;
- Gender responsive education frameworks;
- Curricula reform and teacher education and;
- Education in emergencies and humanitarian contexts.

He stated that we as stakeholders know why we need girls to be engaged and pursuing STEM and underlined the need to put in place mechanisms that engage and motivate them to study related fields such as:

1 Adopting gender intelligent and gender responsive methods of teaching and curricula;

2 Eliminating harmful biases and gender stereotypes that socialize girls to think STEM is for boys or men; and

3 Increasing investment in girls' education in STEM as well as build good, affordable and accessible internet infrastructures.

**Ms. Caroline Gaju**, Programme Officer, ITU Regional Office for Africa on behalf of the ITU Regional Director for Africa- **Ms. Anne-Rachel Inné** highlighted the various achievements from the first phase of the initiative and stated that AGCCI partners aim to draw from the lessons learnt from it and build upon the different experiences for the second phase implementation. She emphasized the importance of continuing to equip young girls with digital and personal skills to bridge the gender digital divide and enable inclusiveness for young girls and women in the digital sector through the coding camps during this second phase. She also discussed the need to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender and coding in national curricula for future employment opportunities and address the challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic that hinder young girls and women from participating and engaging fully in the digital sector.

**Ms. Gaju,** furthermore, informed that the online platform for AGCCI which was developed during the first phase to facilitate online engagement of young girls to build their ideas and projects further to foster innovation through the exchange of experiences and continuous learning, will be hosted bye virtual ITU Academy platform. She remarked that the **ITU Academy provides enhanced capacity, functionalities that can be leveraged with a range of capacity development activities as well as constantly evolving e-learning platform that aims to optimize the learning experience for the users.**

**Mr. Daniel Baheta**-Ag.UNICEF Tanzania Deputy Representative on behalf of UNICEF Liaison to the AU and ECA highlighted 4 key points for why stakeholders need to Invest in Girls:

1. *To prepare them for future work***:** Girls need skills to succeed in life and compete in the future workforce. This is in line with UNICEF core principle in empowering girls and women. Our current agenda focused on ensuring learning leads to earning and improvement of adolescents livelihood skills;
2. *To support them to lead prosperous lives***:** Women with secondary education could earn twice as much as those with no education;
3. *To contribute to the global economy:* If all adult women completed secondary education, the world could add USD15 to USD 30 trillion to the global economy and;
4. *To create a better future***:** Healthy and empowered girls grow to be healthy and empowered women who raise healthier and more resilient families.

He further specified that adolescent girls are taking the lead as change-makers and leaders of tomorrow. Accordingly, he stated that it is vital to involve girls in issues that impact them, as well as to cherish, acknowledge, and recognize their voices; engaging them in programme design and implementation empowers them to take charge of their lives and take lead in finding solutions to challenges they face and meaningful engagement of girls ensures that interventions are relevant to them and respond to their needs.

In addition, **Mr. Baheta** underscored that young girls need to be supported to utilize and apply their skills in a safe environment.

He discussed that young girls- **should be provided with safe spaces and real-world learning opportunities to apply their skills and need access to female role models in their communities to help them navigate the life challenges and roadblocks that prevent them from achieving their aspirations.**

In conclusion, **Mr. Baheta** listed UNICEF's results as well as current and future commitments within the spaces of girls in ICT. He commented that UNICEF's goal is to continue working with government to accelerate efforts in increasing access to digital learning. in order to improve their learning, life skills and opportunities for employment he asserted that, UNICEF will continue to work with government counterparts to ensure online safety and security of children is guaranteed.

**Mr. Jean Paul Adam**- Director of Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Division (TCND) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa- acknowledged all young girl coders under AGCCI- and pronounced his excitement to witnessing what they will create and do. He confirmed ECA's commitment through TCND to AGCCI and stated that they also **look forward to building synergy between AGCCI and ECA's Connected African Girls Coding Camps**. He further shared a brief background on the 'Connected African Girls Coding Camps' which was launched as part of AGCCI to mark the 75th anniversary of UN in Addis Ababa Ethiopia. **Mr. Adam** presented that thus far 3 hybrid coding camps have been organized in **Ethiopia, Cameroon and the Republic of Guinea reaching a total of 15,000 girls in-person and virtually.** He announced that through these coding camps **178 innovation** projects have been developed, **40 of which have been recognized for their contribution to solving socio-economic issues in the continent.** He also emphasized that **these coding camps are by women for women with 80% the trainers being woman.**

**Mr. Adam** additionally discussed that TCND aims to build on the linkage between tech and creating business opportunities through a partnership with Alibaba group of Africa's *business* heroes where the connected African girls are matched with mentors who help them develop their businesses idea.

He closed his remark extending an invitation to the launch participants to take part in the upcoming coding camp in Senegal organized between May 11-17 at the margins of the 54th session of the Economic Commission for Africa (COM22) and wished a great success to the 2nd phase of AGCCI.

**Ms. Jennifer Kotta,** Education Program officer from UNESCO Tanzania shared on behalf of UNESCO's Liaison office to the AU and ECA, the agency's experiences working on gender and STEM/STEAM education in different countries in Africa such as; the TeachHer project which initiated a gender-responsive pedagogy in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and STEAM (STEM plus Arts and Design) for selected African countries and the HNA project on Girls' Education in Ethiopia and Ghana.

She iterated UNESCO's commitment to scale-up the above-mentioned initiatives to more African countries through partnership and goodwill and quoted that **"UNESCO believes in the power of girls and women. To achieve the 'Africa we want 2063, African girls can code initiative' is essential." She concluded expressing that "Gender equity and the opportunity for girls to code and lead science is our dream and our future"**

The launch event also heard testimonies from AGCCI alumni **Ms. Thereza Joseph** from Tanzania and **Ms. Fatou Ndiaye** from Senegal. The young girls shared their excitement for the launch of the second phase and emphasized the importance of initiatives such as the AGCCI and the need for reaching more African Girls to develop their passion for coding hence enhancing the technological development in Africa by filling the gender gap in tech and finally having The Africa We Want as per the aspiration of the Agenda 2063 . The girl coders also shared their experiences after engaging in coding camps. **Ms. Joseph** told about the advocacy work she has been doing with primary and secondary school for enhanced engagement of girls in ICT against existing gender stereotypes in her community. **Ms. Ndiaye** mentioned the online platform she created for young girl entrepreneurs to sell their products.

The event also included entertainments such as; music video, poetry and short Girls in ICT day commemorative video from the AGCCI girls. It was closed by Dr. Tapiwa Uchizi Nyasulu Rweyemamu and Hon. Riziki Pembe Juma- Minister for Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (Zanzibar).

**Dr. Rweyemamu** emphasized that it is an impeccable time to address Digitalization in Africa and the upcoming revolution. By extension, she stated that it is also essential that we equip our young girls with the relevant skills to effectively compete at a global level at the forefront of this structural shift.

She also highlighted that ensuring that girls at a young age have equal opportunities in education (and other opportunities) is vital for the attainment of the digital transition, sustainable development, the Agenda 2063 and by extension the SDGs and she remarked **it is through initiatives like AGCCI that we close the gender gap, refute impractical social and cultural norms and stigmas against women and girls in non-traditional sectors**. **Dr. Rweyemamu** added It is with initiatives such as these which we begin to take focus on scale that we will attain our goals of empowering our young girls.

She concluded her closing as well with a challenge to all partners to create and coordinate opportunities where the girls can implement the technical skills they have attained and turn them into innovations, businesses, or further upskilling through experience in the sector in this second phase. She underscored that this second phase should consider incorporating soft skills, leadership and management skills that will further empower the girls into forming their own ventures or gaining experience in the sector.

**Hon. Riziki Pembe Juma**, Minister for Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children- Zanzibar expressed her delight to take part in the AGCCI 2nd phase launch and to close the event. She commended the efforts by AGCCI partners to promoting gender responsive STEM education which recognizes and responds to the specific learning styles and needs of girls and attract them to these fields. She reiterated that enhancing the participation of women in STEM subject is a key priority in Zanzibar and Tanzania at large.

She shared that the Zanzibar education sector development plan 2016/17-2020/21 has put in place strategies to promote more girls including girls with disability in TVET and STEM subjects in order to sustain and capacitate talent in skills on science to reduce the gender gap.
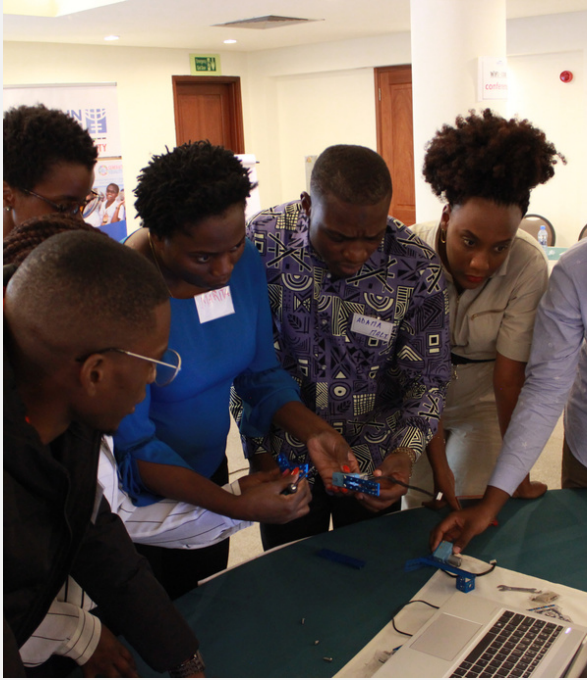
Though the GE Action Coalition, **Hon. Juma** reconfirmed that Tanzania has committed to further strengthen girls' engagement in STEM. Amongst these actions, she stated, is **the establishment of innovation hubs and vocational training center for girls**.

She acclaimed that AGCCI phase 2 has come at an opportune time aligning with Tanzania's vison and plan as well as those other 10 priority countries.

Hon. Juma also shared her contentment for the programme's plans to support ministries of education and ICT in all 11 countries to mainstream, gender, ICT and coding in national curricula which is in line with African Union's Science, Technology and Innovation strategy for Africa 2024 which creates an enabling environment to further achieve agenda 2063 for the Africa we want.

She concluded by stating that the success stories of the AGCCI girls from UN Women has left a lasting impression on her and she learned that the AGCCI has enabled the young girls to build their confidence in their technological abilities and that using the skills they have learned they have sprouted tangible ideas, building business and promoting SDGs. She closed reemphasizing her Government's commitment to the initiative and affirmed that they will be forming a Special Technical Committee which will follow up on the planning, progress and impact of AGCCI

# AFRICAN GIRLS CAN CODE INITIATIVE (AGCCI) 2ND PHASE

**2022-2023**

AGCCI
AFRICAN GIRLS CAN CODE INITIATIVE