

Women and the Web Alliance

Connecting women and girls to information and opportunities

Women and the Web Alliance is a public-private partnership between USAID, NetHope, Intel Corporation, World Pulse, World Vision, UN Women, and Women in Technology in Nigeria to get more girls and young women online to develop their digital literacy skills, improve their employability, and reduce the Internet 'gender gap.' The alliance seeks to create a 'movement' bringing more than 600,000 girls and young women online in Nigeria and Kenya in the next three years.

The alliance's partners share a common interest in increasing opportunities for young women to generate greater income, receive a quality education, increase their sense of empowerment and equity, extend their support networks, and increase their community participation.



Bridging the Internet gender gap

Increasingly, technology skills are vital in education and business, but women in sub-Saharan Africa are disproportionately left behind in accessing the Internet and the benefits it holds. Only 40 million women in sub-Saharan Africa have access to and use of the Internet compared to 70 million men. This 30 million difference is sub-Saharan Africa's Internet gender gap.

The barriers to technology access and use for women around the world include a range of factors, such as:

- Cultural norms discouraging or prohibiting women from using information and communications technologies (ICTs)
- Higher levels of illiteracy among girls and women
- Low accessibility and availability of information and communications technologies (ICTs) infrastructure



KENNETH KIBET / WORLD VISION

12-year-old Tulasha does research on a computer at a Community Learning Centre in Kenya.



JON WARREN / WORLD VISION

The Women and the Web Alliance supports getting more girls and women online in order to develop digital literacy skills, improve employability for women and reduce the Internet gender gap.

Connecting women and girls to the world, together

The alliance is working to make the Internet more accessible, relevant and engaging for girls and women, specifically those between the ages of 12 – 25, who comprise a large and growing population lacking opportunities for employment and skills development. Key pillars of the programme include:

- 1 Digital literacy:** The integration of digital literacy training into gender and development programmes enables women to access hardware, software, Internet connectivity and ongoing support. With mobile platforms, individuals can follow different learning paths through a variety of channels, including phone and tablet apps.
- 2 Knowledge and voices:** The power of digital media connects women and gives them a global voice. The Internet can empower women by providing them with an opportunity to connect with people outside of their communities, which, in turn, creates a strong incentive for women to continue using ICTs. This will provide long-term benefits in increased confidence and expression.
- 3 Economic opportunities:** Internet use can increase the opportunities for women and girls in employment, online work or improved businesses. ICT-enabled employment opportunities and skills training can generate social and economic opportunities for those employed, their families and their communities.
- 4 The 'movement':** System-level collaborations can enhance the inclusion of women and girls in the information society. Together, the alliance will help create a movement to address the challenges of the Internet gender gap by building, fostering and supporting partners.

How World Vision is helping

The Women and the Web Alliance begins by leveraging the work that World Vision is conducting in 18 school-based technology centres in impoverished areas of Western Kenya. This involves:

- Making the centres available to communities during evenings and weekends, specifically targeting over 7,000 women and girls.
- Implementing and scaling the Intel® Learn Easy Steps training programme in school-based computer labs, which will be made available for community access, especially for women and girls, both in the training and in becoming trainers of others.
- Developing an innovative approach to delivering digital literacy skills by integrating a global social network of women into the training process through mobile technology.
- Implementing a mobile education and gaming platform developed by other Women and the Web Alliance partners to enable more individuals to participate and gain skills in compelling and engaging ways.
- Integrating the trained girls and women into World Vision programmes in the region, including employer surveys to determine gaps and needed skills, and working with existing Community Voice and Action programmes to create and administer community engagement events. They also will work with the gatekeepers of communities to launch, sustain and grow the programmes.

For more information about Women and the Web Alliance, please email Education and Life Skills at World Vision International: EdLS@wvi.org

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