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#CyberDivas

WOMEN IN CYBER

A Newsletter by the UNODC Global Programme on Cybercrime



A LOOK INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- International Women's Day 2023: "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality"
- Cyber Shujaa: Opportunities for 1,000 Young Kenyan Women in 2023
- Empowering women can help fix the cybersecurity staff shortage
- AWIC member launches initiative to empower young women in Cyberlaw and Cyber security

International Women's Day 2023: "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality"

On March 8, 2023, women from around the world celebrated International Women's Day under the theme: "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality". This year's edition aimed to explore the impact of the digital gender gap on widening economic and social inequalities and to put the spotlight on the importance of protecting the rights of women and girls in digital spaces. It also aimed to address online and ICT-facilitated gender-based violence.

Today, everything currently goes through a digital process. However, 37% of women do not use the

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Internet, even though they account for nearly half the world's population, according to UN Women.

If women are unable to access the Internet and do not feel safe online, they are unable to develop the necessary digital skills to engage in digital spaces, which diminishes their opportunities to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) related fields. By 2050, 75% of jobs will be related to STEM areas. Yet today, women hold just 22% of positions in artificial intelligence, to name just one.

The Global Programme on Cybercrime, through its UNODC Women in Cyber (AWIC) Networking group, has been working, connecting and empowering women working or interested in the cyber and digital fields in Africa to close the gender gap that exists in the cyber field in Africa. Since 2021, the Programme has provided several cyber-related trainings and professional trainings to AWIC members to help propel their careers in cyber. In 2022, the Programme also organised the first UNODC Women in Cyber Summit, which brought together women from Africa and Southeast Asia to exchange on the challenges they face in their everyday work.

CYBER SHUJAA: OPPORTUNITIES FOR 1,000 YOUNG KENYAN WOMEN IN 2023

A new affirmative action program by the Kenya Bankers Association, Serianu and USIU dubbed Cyber Shujaa promises to increase young Kenyan women's chances of entering the cybersecurity profession. The initiative is designed to bridge the training, placement and retention gap for Kenyan youth in cybersecurity to counter increasing losses to cyber criminals.



Cyber Shujaa will scale up the population of women in the sector by running women-only training tracks for each cohort of students. The program aims to train and place 2,000 Kenyan youth with half of them female by the end of 2023. Speaking in Nairobi during the graduation of the second cohort of 160 Cyber Shujaa trainees, KBA Director of Technical Services, Fidelis Muia observed that

less than 30 percent of Cyber Shujaa graduates were female, yet Kenya's economy has the capacity to absorb 10,000 cybersecurity executives annually. [Read more here](#)

EMPOWERING WOMEN CAN HELP FIX THE CYBERSECURITY STAFF SHORTAGE

Organizations around the world are increasingly vulnerable to cyber threats. In 2020 alone, cybercrimes created a trillion-dollar global business loss. The problem will only escalate: 57% of organizations report unfilled cybersecurity positions, and the global cybersecurity workforce is short some 3.5 million workers in 2021, according to Cybersecurity Ventures. Concern over the dearth of tech talent, in general, is coming to a head as organizations increasingly rely on digital. With cybercrime on the rise, the shortfall in cybersecurity is particularly urgent.



It's also true that some 75% of today's cybersecurity workers are men. It might seem, then, that there's a simple solution to the staffing shortfall: hire women in cybersecurity to fill the empty positions and bolster problem-solving and innovation through gender diversity.

But as the extreme gender gap suggests, any such solution cannot be applied easily or quickly. It requires understanding and addressing a foundational stumbling block: long-standing obstacles have kept many women from entering and pursuing careers in STEM disciplines, including cybersecurity. Women make up 39% of the overall workforce, but account for 38% of those in STEM jobs in general and just 25% in cybersecurity, according to Cybersecurity Ventures.

Solving both of these cybersecurity challenges – the staffing shortfall and the gender-based inequity – begins with opening STEM doors to women and girls and then helping them advance in the field.

Women and cybersecurity worldwide

The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) undertook a global survey of 2,000 female STEM undergraduate students in 26 countries spanning six regions – one of just a few studies on this topic to include a global sample. We regarded our survey as an opportunity to test the conventional wisdom about women in STEM and cybersecurity.

Our survey corroborated some traditional thinking – but refuted other key, long-held hypotheses:

- It's important to engage girls in STEM early
- Women are aware of cybersecurity
- Women have access to cybersecurity education
- Role models and senior encouragement are critical
- Some women have negative perceptions of cybersecurity as a career choice.
- Women with low awareness of cybersecurity have negative perceptions of people who work in the field. [Read more about it here](#)

DIVERSE ROLE MODELS CAN EMPOWER WOMEN AND GIRLS IN STEM



STEM is the combination of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. People who work in STEM are often the hidden heroes of humanity.

Without these everyday heroes we'd still be living in the dark ages. STEM superheroes save lives, protect the planet, and create future possibilities. They literally keep society functioning and moving forward and yet most of the population is unaware of the vital work people in STEM do.

Role models inform, influence and inspire the decisions people make about their life and career. The lack of visible diverse STEM role models who represent the breadth of career opportunities in STEM is a key contributor to the skills shortage problem.

To plug the STEM skills gap, the net must be widened. This requires more diverse role models to inspire and influence a wider pool of talent. Diversity is the difference and everyone benefits from diverse role models. [Read more](#)

AWIC MEMBER LAUNCHES INITIATIVE TO EMPOWER YOUNG WOMEN IN CYBERLAW AND CYBER SECURITY

Dr Ifeoma .E. Nwafor, an AWIC member, recently launched '[CyberSecPolicy_Girls \(CyberSP Girls\)](#)', an initiative that strives to address 'the cybersecurity and policy skills

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gap, encourage industry growth and empower girls/women in the cyber field'. as written on her LinkedIn page. Dr Ifeoma aims through this initiative to create a pathway for young girls to develop a holistic; expert knowledge in cybersecurity and policies regulating the cyber ecosystem. The initiative also offers free mentorship programs and training for girls who are interested in pursuing a career in the cyber field as well as conduct awareness campaigns on online safety, gender-based violence, domestic violence and women's development/empowerment from

the grassroots level to the urban areas in and around communities. Dr Ifeoma developed this initiative after participating in the UNODC Africa Women in Cyber Summit in Thailand in 2022 and being inspired by the work of other participants in the summit. This initiative was at the top of her action plan, developed at the summit. The Global Programme on Cybercrime is thrilled to work with women like Dr Ifeoma who are keen on contributing to the fight against cybercrime while closing the existing gender gap in the cyber field.

THE UNODC CYBER CAFE RETURNS IN APRIL 2023

After months of the Cyber 101 sessions, a training developed to provide AWIC members with basic knowledge and skills on certain concepts in cybercrime and cybersecurity, the Global Programme is glad to announce that the '**Cyber Café**' sessions will return in April 2023. Coffee guests invited to exchange with AWIC members will aim to exchange and spotlight their experiences in working in the cyber field.

Upcoming events

- **Cyber Café - April 2023**
- **UNODC Africa Digital Forensics Challenge - 03 - 16 April 2023** The UNODC Global Programme on Cybercrime has launched the 3rd edition of the the Africa Digital Forensics capture the flag challenge. The competition this year will challenge the participants on iPhone and Android forensics. Follow every aspect of the competition on our Twitter account [@UNODC_WCAfrica](https://twitter.com/UNODC_WCAfrica)