

Education

UNESCO launches initiative to boost digital literacy among women, girls

By Joselyn Kafui Nyadzi

UNESCO, in collaboration with the Beijing Normal University and the Ministry of Education, has launched a two-year project: Closing the Digital Divide: Ensuring Gender-Transformative Digital Skills Education for Women, aimed at empowering women and girls with essential digital skills to contribute to the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs).

According to UNESCO, only 40 to 44 women per 100 men possessed basic spreadsheet skills in Sub-Saharan Africa, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions.

Hence, the project, which was launched last week, also seeks to enhance digital literacy and technological inclusion for women and girls, addressing the persistent gender gap in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) education.

Project

The initiative focuses on three key areas which include equipping teachers and teacher trainers with modern, gender-responsive digital education methods; expanding opportunities for girls through mentorship programmes, after-school STEM projects, innovation camps; and facilitating knowledge exchange through field visits to China, where participants will learn from successful models in ICT education.

Benefits

At the event, the Head of Office and Representative to Ghana at UNESCO, Edmond Moukala, highlighted the importance of the initiative in fostering socio-economic transformation.

"We know that when we talk about poverty or any other challenges affecting development, women and children, especially young people, are always at the heart of the most affected."

"If we want to address the issue of development, we must ensure women's empowerment; educationally, economically and digitally. Otherwise, we will never, and I repeat, never, truly reach the objectives of the 2030 Development Agenda," he said.

He emphasised that the programme aimed to empower both educated and uneducated women in digitalisation.

"We are going beyond just the educated ones. We are exploring ways to support women in remote areas like those selling bananas or other local goods, to use their phones and voice

messages to become digitally connected. With digitisation, their access to clients will be wider, extending beyond their geographical location," he said.

Mr Moukala further highlighted that the initiative aligned with Ghana's 24-hour economy vision, which sought to boost education, digital transformation, and economic participation, particularly for women and youth.

Importance

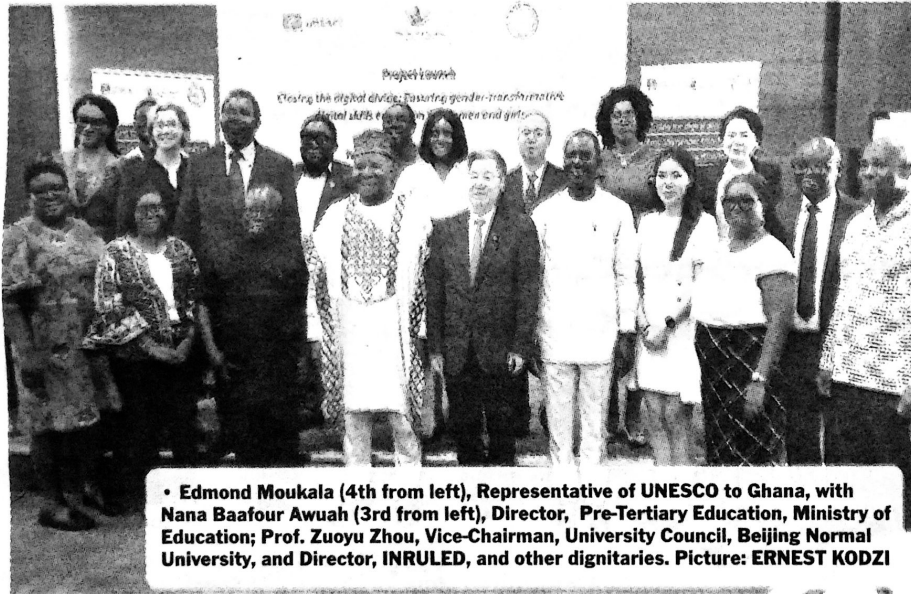
The Director for Pre-Tertiary Education, Nana Baffour Awuah, emphasised the urgent need to close the digital divide and ensure equal opportunities for women and girls in the digital space.

He mentioned that the initiative aligned with Ghana's broader efforts to improve access to quality education for all, regardless of gender.

By equipping women and girls with transformative digital skills, he explained, the project would open doors to economic independence, leadership roles and innovation, ultimately fostering a more equitable and prosperous society.

He further stressed that achieving those goals required strong collaboration from both local and international development partners.

Nana Awuah reiterated the government's commitment to digital education, emphasising that the future of Ghana's education system and the nation as a whole depended on empowering women and girls in the digital space.



• Edmond Moukala (4th from left), Representative of UNESCO to Ghana, with Nana Baffour Awuah (3rd from left), Director, Pre-Tertiary Education, Ministry of Education; Prof. Zuoyu Zhou, Vice-Chairman, University Council, Beijing Normal University, and Director, INRULED, and other dignitaries. Picture: ERNEST KODZI