

Girls, tech programme launched to boost female participation in STEM

By Joselyn Kafui Nyadzi

THE Ghana Employers' Association (GEA), in partnership with the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise, has launched an initiative dubbed the "Girls and Tech Programme" to boost female participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

The programme, which seeks to encourage young girls in junior and senior high schools to pursue careers in STEM fields, formed part of broader efforts by both Ghanaian and Norwegian

employers' organisations to bridge gender gaps in the future labour market, particularly as economies become increasingly technology-driven.

Launched in Accra last Friday, the initiative also sought to provide mentorship, career exposure and practical industry attachments to develop the interest and confidence of girls in STEM-related areas.

The beneficiary schools for this year included seven institutions: Achimota School, Accra Girls' Senior High School, West African Senior High School (WASS), La-Bawaleshie Presby School and the University of Ghana Staff Village School, among others.

Initiative

Speaking at the launch, the Director for Resource Development and Membership Services at the GEA, Yvonne Asare-Yeboah, said the initiative responded to long-standing data showing persistent gaps in female participation in STEM education and careers in the country.

"Many girls either shy away from STEM subjects at an early stage or switch to non-technical fields at the tertiary level, contributing to the low

representation of women in STEM professions," she noted.

She explained that the programme was designed to expose girls to mentorship and real workplace experiences, helping them recognise that they too belong in such spaces.

Ms Asare-Yeboah said that the initiative would be expanded to more schools each year.

Commendation

The Project Manager of the Norwegian Girls in Tech project, Vibeke Saarem, commended the GEA for introducing the initiative, recounting that the Norwegian version began 20 years ago as a local project before gaining national recognition and government support.

She expressed optimism that Ghana could achieve similar success and scale.

"Having role models is important. I never had one when I was training as a mechanical engineer, so I am happy these girls will have mentors to guide and inspire them," she said.

To girls

The Head of Capital and Programmes Management at Telecel

Ghana, Dr Joyce Koi-Akrofi, shared her experience of rising through a male-dominated engineering environment.

She highlighted that social norms, financial constraints, lack of mentorship and inadequate laboratory resources continue to pose barriers to girls pursuing STEM careers.

She urged the students to "be bold, learn hard and ask the right questions. It is possible. I was once as young as you," she said.

Stakeholders' role

Dr Koi-Akrofi also called on the government, industry players and educational institutions to strengthen investments in laboratories, scholarships, mentorship networks and teacher training to sustain the momentum of such initiatives.



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