REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

World Bank Group – CES Global Tech Challenge: Solutions for Women

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The gender digital divide is expanding and threatens progress on efforts to provide universal, inclusive internet access[1]. Nearly 300 million women in low- and middle-income countries remain unconnected. Women are 10% less likely than men to own a mobile phone, and 23% less likely to use mobile Internet.[2] According to the World Bank's Findex, 72 percent of unbanked men own a mobile phone, compared with 62 percent of unbanked women —a gender gap of 10 percentage points.[3] A Pew survey of 39 countries found a large gender gap favoring men in social media use in Tunisia, Ghana, India, Kenya, and Senegal.[4] Women also form only 20% of software developers globally, and participate lesser in online developer communities: in a survey conducted by HackerRank, a global coding competition site, 16% of the 25,000 respondents identified as female.[5] Finally, women are less likely than men to start enterprises in the ICT sector.[6]

Efforts to include women in technology have faced significant challenges, despite high demand for relevant digital skills in a changing global labor market. The World Bank Group in a recent study[7] has found that women's participation in coding bootcamps – training programs to prepare graduates to compete in technology labor markets – is lower than men's rates of participation. When women do enroll, they tend to have higher dropout rates in comparison to men as well. Companies surveyed in the Global South reveal a high demand for digital skills—and a skills shortage. In a recent IFC report, nearly 65 percent of the job vacancies that employers were trying to fill in Ghana required at least basic digital skills, but 20 percent of the companies reported being forced to recruit internationally for positions[8].

Addressing the digital gender gap is an urgent priority – women's lower levels of access and skills threatens to compound gender inequality in society. Digital inequality can hinder women's economic empowerment by hampering access to high wage employment and potentially exacerbate the gender wage gap. Lack of basic access to the Internet increasingly prevents women from access to life-enhancing services for education, health, and financial inclusion that are delivered digitally. Poor data and less diverse teams also have significant effects on design of

1 Measuring Digital Development: Facts and Figures. 2019. The International Telecommunications Union.

2 The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2019. GSMA. Retrieved from: https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/GSMA-Connected-Women-The-Mobile-Gender-Gap-Report-2019.pdf

3 The Global Findex Report. 2017. The World Bank. Retrieved from: https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/sites/globalfindex/files/chapters/2017%20Findex%20full%20report_chapter6.pdf

4 Social media use continues to rise in developing countries, but plateaus across developed ones. 2018. Pew Research. Retrieved from: http://assets.pewresearch.org/ wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/06/15135408/ Pew-Research-Center_Global-Tech-Social-Media- Use_ 2018.06.19.pdf 5 EQUALS Research Report 2019. EQUALS Research Group. Retrieved from: https://www.itu.int/en/action/gender-equality/Documents/EQUALS%20Research%20Report%202019.pdf

6 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: Women's entrepreneurship 2016/2017 report. Kelley, D., Baumer, B. S., Brush, C. G., Greene, P. G., Mahnaz, M., Mahdi, M., Dean, M. Retrieved from: https://www.babson. edu/Academics/centers/blank-center/global-research/ gem/Documents/GEM%202016-2017%20Womens%20 Report.pdf

7 Hammond, Alicia Samantha; Mulas, Victor; Nadres, Pilar Loren Garcia. 2018. Women wavemakers : practical strategies for recruiting and retaining women in coding bootcamps (English). Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/682341531982131260/Women-wavemakers-practical-strategies-for-recruiting-and-retaining-women-in-coding-bootcamps

8 Digital Skills in Sub-Saharan Africa: Spotlight on Ghana. Washington D.C. International Finance Corporation in cooperation with L.E.K. Consulting.

products across sectors – Caroline Criado Perez in her recent book, *Invisible Women*, makes a compelling case on how across seventeen sectors, design of products and services have systematically disadvantaged women in comparison to men. Further, in the fourth industrial revolution, women need specialized, technical skills to thrive in the digital economy. A growing gender digital divide across access and skills amplifies existing social inequalities that not only threatens progress but shows potential to reverse the gains made in decades prior.

A holistic approach that brings together governments, private sector and public interest organizations is key to closing the gender digital divide. A gender lens that mainstreams gender sensitive design, analysis, implementation and evaluation to address these barriers across all five pillars of the digital economy – digital infrastructure, digital skills, digital platforms, digital entrepreneurship and digital financial services – is critical. Research shows that barriers to gender digital equality are linked to availability of infrastructure, financial constraints, ICT ability and aptitude, interest and perceived relevance of ICTs, safety and security, and socio-cultural and institutional contexts.[9] Relaxing one barrier alone may not improve outcomes for the most marginalized women in society, as they face multi-dimensional barriers that prevent them from maximizing their potential within the Digital Economy.

The World Bank Group – CES Global Tech Challenge: Solutions for Women Focus Areas

This year's World Bank Group – CES Global Tech Challenge addressing the gender digital divide calls for innovative solutions that can bridge the gender digital divide through focus on both **supply- and demand-side challenges that constrain women's access and use of digital technologies**. The challenge will award **scalable innovative solutions** that seek to address *four key focus areas:*

1. *Platforms:*
    Solutions in this focus area will focus on digital platforms that uniquely serve the needs of women and girls in emerging markets. Some examples under this focus area may include:
    - E-commerce platforms focused on reaching women and girls in emerging markets through their products and marketing strategies
    - Platforms that build communities for women entrepreneurs to discuss and network online
    - Women's safety helpline platforms that enable reporting of sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, and gender-based cyber violence in a secure and safe way

2. *Digital Skills:*
    Solutions in this focus area will focus on the development of digital skills products and programs with a focus to closing the gender digital divide. Some examples of such programs may include:

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[9] EQUALS Research Report 2019. EQUALS Research Group. Retrieved from:
https://www.itu.int/en/action/gender-equality/Documents/EQUALS%20Research%20Report%202019.pdf

- Applications that use personalized and adaptive learning to teach learners basic, intermediate, or advanced digital skills, or any combination thereof, using digital technologies.
- Coding bootcamps delivered online and blended programs that target and recruit women and girls to prepare them for a changing labor market. These may be either integrable within education curricula or provisioned as standalone services for on-the-job learning.
- Products that impart education in advanced digital skills with complementary investments in and measurement of hard-to-measure socio-emotional skills such as collaboration, creativity, innovation and learning.

3. *Online content:*
   Solutions in this focus area will focus on applications and technology solutions that provide relevant online content that is tailored towards women and girls. Some examples may include:
   - Applications that impart technology-enabled early-grade reading content, focused on addressing regressive gender norms
   - Content solutions in local languages that address issues around sexual and reproductive health
   - Locally relevant content on educational and career opportunities for women and girls in various stages of their career, including alternative and non-traditional careers in the country context

4. *Innovative business models:*
   Solutions under this focus area will focus on relaxing supply-side barriers to accessing digital technologies. These may include:
   - Innovative subscription models that may subsidize or alleviate the financial burden on women to own and use mobile devices (such as pay as you go) or other business models that target or include women in meaningful ways to sustainably access the Internet
   - Mobile subscription models that favor women-ownership and use of mobile internet on an ongoing basis

Successful applicants will show clear links between their proposed solution that leverages the potential of digital technologies, and development outcomes for women and girls in World Bank Group client countries. They will have validated their solution in a context (either as a pilot, or at scale), and will detail evidence of its impact and potential for scale (if pilot) and replicability (if already scaled in some contexts). Successful applicants will be specific in identifying target populations, providing targeted yet customizable solutions, and show a clear path to long-term sustainability of the solution within their contexts.

The World Bank Group – CES Global Tech Challenge Opportunity

This challenge forms one of three CES tech challenges being conducted in partnership with the World Bank Group.

Winners will:
- Receive recognition and brand visibility at CES 2021 as a Global Tech Challenge winner
- engage with governments and World Bank Group task teams to scale their solutions within development projects
- access mentorship from technology companies and task team leads to help scale their solutions
- share their stories at multiple international fora -- CES 2021, regional conferences, and the World Bank Group's Spring and Annual Meetings,
- build their professional networks through engagement with other winners and raise their international profile and brand

Application Requirements

Applicants will be required to submit an application detailing their solution under one or multiple of the four Challenge Focus Areas. The proposal should explain:

1. **The Solution's Theory of Change**
   - A successful application will make clear and strong links between the technological solutions that they propose and the challenges to women's access and use of technologies that they seek to address in the focus area (digital skills, local content and platforms, and innovative business models) that they tackle
   - A good theory of change will explain diagrammatically why and how change would occur through their solution and what long term outcomes they seek to achieve for either of the four focus areas (digital skills, local content and platforms, online content, and innovative business models)
   - A good Theory of Change will not only consider outcomes/preconditions, but also show the causal linkages through the intervention between the shorter-term, intermediate, and longer-term outcomes.
   - These identified changes through the solution should be mapped as a pathway, showing both a chronological flow as well as the relationship between each outcome and all the others.

2. **Evidence of the solution's prior impact on target populations**
   - Successful applicants will provide evidence of their solution's impact on outcomes in either of the four focus areas (digital skills, local content/platforms, online content, and innovative business models) that they seek to address.
   - Causal evidence on the potential solution's impact, if any, will be highly valued in the judging process.
   - Primary research (market research, ethnographic or case study-based work) as well as secondary evidence (from related interventions) will be considered as well. Applicants should err on the side of providing as much evidence as possible to support their solution's impact in the given context, and show clear path to their solution's long-term sustainability within their target context/s.

3. **Potential for replicability and scale to other contexts**

   - In this section, applicants will be required to provide potential for scale and replicability of their solution, as the challenge hopes to provide applicants with potential spossibilities for scale in World Bank Group client countries. The challenge understands that scale will mean different things for different solutions: scaling a mobile application is a significantly different challenge than scaling an innovative mobile broadband infrastructure solution. Applicants are recommended to explain scale as the envision it for their solution within the narrative and will be judged against criteria for their solution's potential for and at scale.

Shortlisted candidates will be required to provide additional information based on requirements of projects that they may be matched to.

Eligibility Requirements

The challenge is open to all eligible for-profit and public interest organizations that are currently in the process of scaling solutions to bridge the gender digital divide.
- Individuals and governments are not eligible to apply.
- UN Agencies are not eligible to apply.
- Recently registered organizations (both for-profit and not-for-profit) are eligible to apply.

There are no eligibility restrictions based on the size of the organization, be it a start-up, privately traded, or publicly traded organization. There are no restrictions on the size of public interest organizations either. There are no restrictions based on the organization's focus area or current business lines. Organizations that are exploring gendered effects of existent solutions are eligible to apply.

Timeline

- The challenge was announced on 7 Jan 2020 at the CES Tech Conference 2020
- Applications open February 28, 2020
- Applications will be accepted through **June 1, 2020, 23:59**, **midnight (23:59) in the applicant's local time zone. ***
- Innovators will have the opportunity to meet World Bank teams in July/August 2020*
- Finalists announced in October 2020* at the World Bank Annual Meetings
- Winners announced at CES 2021*

***Subject to change due to the global outbreak of COVID-19.**

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Description	Merit
Relevance and Feasibility	• How does the proposed solution target the WBG-CES Tech Challenge Focus Areas? • Does the solution adequately demonstrate a sufficiently strong and well-explained theory-of-change to meaningfully impact the gender digital divide? • How does the solution account for the socio-economic context and cultural challenges of the context where it is to be deployed?	30
Sustainability	• How does the project propose to be sustainable over the long term? • What elements of financial sustainability have been considered by the applicant/s? • How will the solution adopt to the rapid pace of technological and social change that affects the impact that it has? • What other factors (partnerships, buy-in from key stakeholders, collaborations with other entities) matter to the long-term success of this solution? • How does the solution account for political economy risks that may jeopardize sustainability?	30
Scale and Replicability	• What evidence does the solution provide for its potential for success (from pilot-to-scale, or for replicability at scale)? • How has the solution sought to address challenges posed by diverse contexts? • How does the solution choose to address challenges at different parts of the scaling process?	30
Fit-for-purpose	• How does the solution show potential for engagement?	10

Judging Process

- Solutions will be evaluated by a diverse and eminent panel of experts drawn from different global practices within the World Bank Group.
- The panel shall comprise task team leads, researchers, managers, and country management units.
- There will be separate panels for the focus areas outlined by the challenge.
- Care will be taken to ensure diversity (both of geography and gender) on the judging panels. Applications will be screened for eligibility by a working group before being presented to the full panel.
- Conflict of interest (including perceived conflicts) will be considered in constituting review panels for each application. Conflicts of interest would include presence on boards of applicant organizations as well as close familial relationships with senior management or the Board of Directors of an applicant entity.