



The road to gender equality

10 years of the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education



Education
2030 

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UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to “*ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*” The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



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SHORT SUMMARY

10 years of action to advance girls' and women's education

Despite significant efforts, 133 million girls remain out of school and women represent two-thirds of all adults unable to read or write. Deep-rooted biases, social norms and gendered expectations often restrict the quality of education girls and women receive, and their life opportunities.

Established in 2015 with the support of the People's Republic of China, the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education honours individuals, institutions, and organizations driving transformative action to advance girls' and women's education.

The Prize's laureates are expanding access to education, transforming lives, and strengthening families and communities. They are removing barriers to learning – including early pregnancy, gender-based violence, and discrimination – and creating new pathways for lifelong learning and empowerment. By promoting literacy and skills development, they are helping women succeed in all fields, including those traditionally dominated by men. They also support teachers as powerful advocates for gender equality and help shape inclusive, supportive learning environments where every learner can thrive.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education, this publication celebrates the laureates and the lasting impact of their work.



"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"



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Introduction

2025 marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a landmark blueprint adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 and endorsed by 189 governments. It remains foundational for advancing the rights of women and girls, including the right to education.

This year also celebrates the 10-year anniversary of the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education, established in 2015 with funding by the Government of the People's Republic of China. The Prize annually honours those driving transformative change to advance girls' and women's education.

Significant progress has been made: gender parity in primary and lower secondary enrolment was achieved by 2009, and in upper secondary education by 2013 (UNESCO, 2024a). Over 30 years, nearly 84 million more girls enrolled in primary and nearly 135 million in secondary education. Tertiary enrolment of young women rose from 38 million to 137 million (UNESCO-UIS, 2025). Yet, 133 million girls remain out of school, with poverty, distance, early marriage and pregnancy continuing to hinder access (UNESCO, 2024a).

Deep-rooted biases, social norms, and expectations often restrict both the quality of education girls receive and the subjects they pursue. This gap is particularly pronounced in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), where women account for just 35% of graduates—a figure that has stagnated over the past decade—and remain significantly underrepresented in STEM careers (UNESCO, 2024b).

Women's participation in adult learning is increasing, but barriers such as family responsibilities, lack of child care, and weak policies persist. Women represent two-thirds of adults unable to read or write, limiting their opportunities for further education, employment and civic participation, and having wide-ranging effects on future generations.

Achieving gender equality in and through education demands sustained commitment, bold leadership, and continued investment to ensure all girls and women can learn, lead, and thrive throughout life.





UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education

The UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education honours outstanding and innovative contributions made by individuals, institutions, and organizations driving transformative change to advance girls' and women's education.

Founded in 2015 and awarded annually, this is the first UNESCO Prize of its kind, uniquely recognizing successful projects that improve and promote the educational prospects of girls and women, thereby enhancing the quality of their lives.

Funded by the Government of the People's Republic of China, the prestigious Prize is awarded each year by the Director-General of UNESCO to two laureates. Each laureate receives a US\$50,000 award to support and advance their work in girls' and women's education.

Nominations are submitted by governments of UNESCO Member States or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in official partnership with UNESCO through an online platform hosted by UNESCO. Each nominator may propose up to three individuals, institutions, or organizations making strong, innovative contributions to girls' and women's education.

To be eligible, projects must have been established and operational for at least two years and demonstrate potential for replication and scalability. An independent International Jury of five experts evaluates the nominations based on their potential for impact, innovation, and sustainability. Based on the Jury's recommendations, the Director-General of UNESCO announces the laureates, who receive their awards during the International Day of the Girl celebrations.

Learn more about laureates from 2016-2025 in the following pages. Read more about the Prize at the link here:



Directorate of Early Childhood Education Development, Indonesia

2016 laureate



‘If this country wants to have an intelligent, independent and productive nation, it must have educated women.’

– Ella Yulaelawati, Directorate of Early Childhood Education Development

Context

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) lays the essential foundation for lifelong learning and represents one of the most effective investments a country can make to promote holistic development, gender equality, and social cohesion. In Indonesia, 25% of children participate in ECCE programmes (UNESCO-UIS, 2025).

Project

The Directorate was awarded for its project *Improving Access and Quality of Girls’ Education through Community-Based Early Childhood Education and Early-Year Gender Mainstreaming*. Grounded in the belief that long-term improvements in girls’ education require early gender mainstreaming, the project addresses potential gender bias, discrimination and harmful stereotypes from birth to age eight.

Impact

The project supported the mainstreaming of gender in community-based early childhood education programmes across five provinces in Indonesia. It targeted teachers, mothers and education administrators through early socialization, training, workshops and multi-media campaigns.

Beyond increasing enrolment, the project enhanced school readiness by improving children’s communication skills and knowledge of health and well-being through a community-centred approach – creating positive effects that extended beyond the children enrolled in the programme. Its success stems from fostering a gender-responsive environment, using stories, songs, and visual materials free of stereotypes.

All children are encouraged to freely explore all toys – girls play with trucks in the sandpit, while boys care for baby dolls. In this safe, inclusive space, where equality, care, and respect prevail, children take their first meaningful steps toward gender equality.

Female Students Network Trust (FSNT), Zimbabwe

2016 laureate



'The Network provided a safe space for me to talk about everything I've gone through without judgment.'

– **Thembi, student and member of FSNT**

Context

Gender-based violence in educational institutions is a pervasive global issue that transcends geographic, cultural, social, economic, and ethnic boundaries. While institutional responses to this are evolving in Zimbabwe, continued commitment is needed to strengthen policies, raise awareness and create safe spaces for all learners.

Project

The Female Students Network Trust (FSNT) was awarded for its *Empowerment of Tertiary Education Female Students through Leadership Development and Mentorship Programmes in Zimbabwe*. Founded in 2005 by University of Zimbabwe students, it promotes female leadership and advocates for policies addressing issues faced by female students. The programme originated from a survey in 2005 revealing that 98% of students experienced sexual harassment in learning environments, often perpetuated by lecturers.

Impact

Advocacy by FSNT, amplified by the Prize, has catalyzed a major shift in Zimbabwe's higher education sexual harassment policies. Whereas only 21 out of 43 institutions previously had draft policies, all now possess either standalone sexual harassment policies or relevant provisions integrated into their gender policies. However, a persistent challenge remains: lecturers found guilty of sexual harassment frequently resign and secure positions at other institutions without facing meaningful consequences.

Despite this, FSNT's empowerment and mentorship programmes have significantly increased female student representation in Student Representative Councils from 15% to 25%, strengthening their influence on student governance. These student leaders have also contributed to shaping the 2021 Zimbabwe's Cyber and Data Protection Act which criminalizes cyberbullying and revenge pornography – issues common on campuses. FSNT's work has not only transformed policies but also cultivated a generation of female leaders driving meaningful and lasting change.

The Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities Center in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (DEPDC/GMS), Thailand

2017 laureate



‘Girls have the right to be taught. We cannot wait until a country is safe.’

– **Sompop Jantraka, Founder, DEPDC/GMS**

Context

Human trafficking and exploitation remain critical global issues, disproportionately affecting women and children. While Thailand serves as both a source and destination country for these crimes, it has taken significant efforts to prevent them through legal reform, international cooperation and enhanced enforcement.

Project

The Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities Center in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (DEPDC/GMS) was awarded for its *Education and Life Skills Training Programme to Help Stateless Children and Women Migrating from Shan State to Thailand*. The community-based NGO in Northern Thailand empowers migrant girls and young women to avoid human trafficking and sexual and labour exploitation through protection, education and life skills training, while also rehabilitating survivors.

Impact

More than 7,000 girls along the borders of Thailand have enrolled in the Center, the Half Day School and the Youth Leadership Training Programme and over 100,000 children and women have indirectly benefited from the Center’s programmes and training activities. Almost all children and youth (90%) involved in the project have built strong life and social skills and are protected from all forms of exploitation.

The DEPDC/GMS also raised awareness globally by hosting 10 groups of international students with backgrounds in social development, law, and psychology who contribute to this project as volunteers. The DEPDC/GMS has established flexible teaching methods that can more effectively help children obtain life skills providing various forms of non-formal education and vocational training adapted to children’s background and needs in addition to teaching reading, writing, mathematics and science. The project is widely recognized as a replicable model nationally and internationally.

The Mini Academy of Science and Technology (MaCTec), Peru

2017 laureate



‘This is about opening doors for girls to have the joy of choosing a full life, exploring the planet and conquering the world.’

– Johanna Johnson, Director and Co-founder, MaCTec

Context

Many countries have prioritized expanding STEM education, especially as technology, AI and other STEM fields increasingly shape the global economy. According to the most recent data from 2017, women comprised 47% of STEM graduates in higher education in Peru (UNESCO-UIS, 2025).

Project

The Mini Academy of Science and Technology (MaCTec) Peru was awarded for its *Mobile MaCTec Bus Labs/Mini Academy of Science and Technology project*, a programme dedicated to creating the first generation of Peruvian women scientists. The initiative aimed to close the gender gap in STEM fields and empower young women to change the world. Through scholarships, girls participated in workshops led by established scientists where they actively explored, created, and experimented.

Mobile labs delivered hands-on research training to rural communities, breaking down barriers to STEM education. Students were then invited to advance their projects at MaCTec labs in universities in Lima, fostering knowledge exchange and inspiring their communities.

Impact

MaCTec advanced science literacy in Peru by nurturing the curiosity and creativity of Peruvian girls. The project had set sights on reaching 20,000 girls by providing access to mobile learning labs, school-based workshops and peer learning sessions. Students who completed the workshops replicated them in their own schools, extending the project's reach further to thousands of girls.

MaCTec developed an innovative approach to science education called Discovery-Peer Learning, featuring workshops on topics ranging from quantum mechanics – exploring the world of atoms – to genetics. All sessions share the common goal of inspiring girls to make their own scientific discoveries.

To further broaden access, MaCTec purchased a bus which was converted into a mobile science museum, designed to bring the project to girls living in remote and rural areas. Following this, COVID-19 lockdowns forced the project to close.

Misr El Kheir Foundation, Egypt

2018 laureate



'I am now able to read, write, and even count my sheep.'

– Eida, student, Luxor province

Context

Significant progress has been made in girls' education in Egypt, with near-universal primary enrolment and improved gender parity. However, retaining girls in secondary school remains challenging, especially in rural and underserved areas, where barriers such as early marriage, long distances to school, and a lack of female teachers persist.

Project

The Misr El Kheir Foundation was awarded for its project *Educational Opportunities for Children in Underserved Villages through Community Schools* which has expanded girls' access to quality education and broadened their career development and life opportunities in Egypt's poorest and most underserved communities. The project supports girls' transition from primary to secondary education and the completion of a full cycle of basic education. It empowers adolescent girls and young women to acquire literacy, life and future employment skills. It also trains teachers to adopt gender-responsive teaching practices and create safe learning environments.

Impact

The Prize provided critical momentum to expand outreach and promote inclusion, enabling the Foundation to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized children. An impressive 98% of students enrolled in Misr El Kheir's community schools passed their end-of-year exams, and 55% of graduates successfully transitioned into secondary education.

The Foundation has established 2,028 community schools serving over 36,000 children, built the capacity of 2,016 community education facilitators, established 600 community education committees, and trained 500 specialized instructors and supervisors targeting 450 underserved Egyptian villages. 'With the visibility and resources brought by the Prize, we've been able to deepen our reach, drive systemic change and amplify the voices of girls and women across Egypt,' shared Dr. Mohamed Refay, Chief Executive Officer, Misr El Kheir Foundation.

Looking ahead, the Foundation plans to further support girls' education by establishing three preparatory schools and integrating technology into community schools, enabling girls and young women to develop vital digital skills.

Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation (WCJF), Jamaica

2018 laureate



'I wasn't ready to be a mom. I couldn't even take care of myself, never mind a child. At the Centre, I learned that giving up was not an option.'

– Tashai, a 15-year-old enrolled in the Centre

Context

While the rate of adolescent fertility has decreased since 2010, 35 out of every 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19 give birth in Jamaica (UNFPA, 2025). Continued efforts are needed to reduce early pregnancies and support young mothers' education and livelihoods.

Project

The Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation (WCJF) was awarded for its *Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC)* project, which helps adolescent girls return to formal schooling after childbirth, especially those facing financial hardship and limited parental support. Part of the Programme for Adolescent Mothers (PAM), the initiative offers pregnant adolescents and young mothers a second chance to complete secondary education and realize their dreams.

It combines core academic subjects with income-generating skills training, delivered through in-person and virtual classes. Onsite nursery facilities support young mothers balance education and childcare. Earning the CSEC qualification enables these young women to access tertiary education and meaningful career opportunities.

Impact

The awarded project facilitated the reintegration of adolescent girls into formal education after childbirth by providing courses in core subject areas, income-generating skills training, and a certification programme that enables entry into higher education. To date, over 55,000 girls and young women have been empowered with a second chance to complete their secondary education. The majority have successfully graduated, going on to pursue tertiary education and diverse professional careers.

Comprehensive support, including educational resources and counselling, helped girls continue their education during pregnancy, contributing to improved results in the CSEC. To support girls from rural areas during examination periods, the project refurbished the Kingston Centre dormitory, providing safe accommodation.

The PAM has been replicated in other countries including Botswana, the Gambia, Grenada, Kenya, and Saint Kitts and Nevis, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and is recognized as an international best practice.

Department of Education, Government of Navarre, Spain

2019 laureate



‘The Prize has been an international endorsement of the commitment of the Department of Education of the Navarre Government.’

– **Alicia Ruiz Oria, Service Director, SKOLAE**

Context

Navarre, a progressive region in northern Spain, has implemented forward-thinking policies to advance gender equality. These include mandatory co-education plans, specialized teacher training and STEM quotas in career pathways. These measures are designed to dismantle gender-based barriers and ensure equal opportunities for all.

Project

The Department of Education of the Government of Navarra was awarded for *SKOLAE: Growing Up in Equality*, a comprehensive school programme designed to challenge gender stereotypes and prevent gender-based violence. SKOLAE engages the entire school community to promote equal pathways for all, regardless of culture, religion, sexual orientation, identity, or other factors.

Participating schools develop and implement a Coeducational Identity Plan, supported by SKOLAE’s technical team and 70 coeducation specialists who assist teachers in integrating these principles into their teaching practice. The initiative adopts a whole-school approach, addressing every aspect of the educational environment – from classrooms and common areas to language use (visual, written, and spoken), student participation, family engagement, and the involvement of non-teaching staff.

Impact

Since its inception, SKOLAE has attracted interest in several autonomous communities in Spain and internationally, partly due to its mandatory training for all public and publicly funded non-university schools. To date, around 280 schools across all educational levels in Navarre have participated, with around 32,000 teacher training certificates issued.

The Co-education Department, composed of four teachers, guides, advises, organizes, and supports coordination networks among schools. An evaluation conducted during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, covering the first cohorts of 113 and 82 schools, respectively, examined the programme’s impact on school culture. It found that co-educational anniversaries are now a normalized part of school life, and co-education principles are integrated into classrooms and curricula.

The evaluation also showed notable improvements in communication with families and the transformation of common spaces. Participating schools reported that SKOLAE has had a transformative effect, fostering the development of a genuine co-educational culture.

Sulá Batsú, Costa Rica

2019 laureate



‘This Prize is important because it highlights not only the truly difficult conditions these girls overcome to achieve incredible things but also the potential and vibrancy of the Central American region.’

– **Kemly Camacho, General Coordinator, Sulá Batsú**

Context

The Costa Rican Ministry of Science, Technology, and Telecommunications has implemented policies to reduce gender and other digital divides. But empowering more girls and women with digital skills and pathways to tech-related studies and careers remains a priority.

Project

Sulá Batsú’s awarded project, *Voices of Central American Girls*, empowers adolescent girls from vulnerable backgrounds by equipping them with digital skills to amplify their voices and develop solutions for themselves and their communities. Implemented in schools, the project offers extracurricular training for girls in digital music, community journalism, technological prototyping, coding and more. It fosters digital literacy, provides coaching, encourages mutual learning, and supports the prototyping of innovative digital solutions. By engaging families and municipalities, it not only benefits local communities but influences education policy.

Impact

Since winning the Prize, Sulá Batsú has taken a leadership role in promoting environmental sustainability in telecommunications policy, advancing women-led digital cooperatives, and fostering culturally relevant technology inclusion for Indigenous and marginalized communities across Central America. Partnering with UNESCO and others, Sulá Batsú launched the Okama Suei (‘internet’ in the Cabécar language) platform to integrate the knowledge and voices of Indigenous women of Costa Rica into the digital economy.

Since 2016, over 4,000 girls have participated in training programmes, resulting in the creation of more than 300 technological prototypes, and digital and audio-visual solutions. Sulá Batsú has supported 12 women-led entrepreneurial initiatives and delivered workshops on electronic waste, the energy consumption of digital technologies, mineral extraction for digital technologies, and environmental responsibility.

The project has positioned environmental sustainability as a key issue with public and private institutions, academia, and civil society organizations, reaching over 1,200 people, of whom 69% are women.

Girl Child Network (GCN), Kenya

2020 laureate



‘The Prize led to increased partnership and collaboration and the establishment of a gender in education movement to track and influence public debate on girls’ education.’

– **Mercy Musomi, Executive Director, GCN**

Context

Despite significant progress in recent decades, 17% of primary school-aged girls remained out of school in 2023 due to socio-economic, cultural, and structural barriers (World Bank and UNESCO-UIS, 2025). Addressing this requires a comprehensive approach combining policy reforms, community engagement, improved infrastructure, and targeted initiatives.

Project

The Girl Child Network’s (GCN) awarded project, *Our Right to Learn – Reaching the Unreached*, enhances access to quality primary school education for vulnerable children, particularly girls, in Kenya’s most remote and underserved areas. Beyond education access, it empowers girls to raise their voices within and beyond the classroom. Implemented in public schools and communities, the project equips girls with knowledge of their rights, responsibilities and life skills, and encourages their participation in school decisions. In partnership with Educate a Child, a global programme of Education Above All, it tackles the root causes of exclusion – including early marriage, disability-related stigma – through community engagement, teacher training, and policy advocacy.

Impact

Since its inception in 2012, the project has benefited over 51,900 children, including more than 25,900 out-of-school girls, through its work with 240 public primary schools across four counties in Kenya. To foster gender-sensitive learning environments, GCN has collaborated with 240 Ministry of Education officials and has trained 1,440 teachers in gender-responsive pedagogy.

Winning the Prize significantly increased GCN’s visibility, expanding its donor support and funding base by 60%. This enabled the strengthening of GCN’s Family Matters Programme, which improved household readiness for school, and contributed to a 35% rise in enrolment and a 44% rise in student retention.

During COVID-19-related school closures, the project leveraged existing community, private, and government structures to raise parental awareness about containment measures and ensure continued learning through village tracking committees, supporting government programmes, and radio broadcasts among others.

Shilpa Sayura Foundation, Sri Lanka

2020 laureate



‘I learned about computers, AI and programming. Now I am confident that I can revolutionize programming and change what people use daily.’

– Pibushaka, age 12, participant in the NextGen AI workshop, Nuwara Eliya region

Context

Sri Lanka’s tech sector is rapidly growing, yet women remain under-represented, making up only 34% of the workforce (Wanigasinghe, 2023). While interest among women is rising, many face challenges advancing in the field due to limited access to hands-on coding and digital skills training, particularly in rural and under-resourced areas.

Project

The Shilpa Sayura Foundation was awarded for the *NextGen Girls in Technology* project, which boosts girls’ and women’s participation in Sri Lanka’s emerging technology sector. As an extracurricular programme, it helps young women in lower and upper secondary schools and universities improve their analytical, local and creative thinking through technology – often providing girls with their first hands-on technology experience. The Foundation offers both online and offline open-access training for students and teachers in key skills such as programming, machine learning, cybersecurity and design.

Impact

The project has reached 7,716 school students, teachers, and university students and awarded 18 scholarships to girls pursuing further education in technology. Its capacity-building and training programmes have expanded to five new locations, broadening regional reach and impact. The Prize also helped the foundation foster partnerships with the Central Province Education Ministry and private sector stakeholders, allowing the project to reach thousands more girls.

In March 2024, NextGen AI held its first workshops for girls in the Nuwara Eliya region, an area with a high proportion of students from disadvantaged and low socio-economic backgrounds. Many girls who had limited access to computers at home were able to explore AI concepts for the first time and engage in hands-on coding sessions using MIT Scratch software.

‘The UNESCO Prize gave us vital local recognition. With this support, we reached thousands more students and empowered girls to shape their own futures through technology,’ shared Poornima Meegammana, Director of the Shilpa Sayura Foundation.

Girl MOVE Academy, Mozambique

2021 laureate

CARMEN
AUGUSTO
GIRL MOVER



‘The Prize fast-tracked our path to systemic impact, enabling us to disseminate this innovative methodology from our grassroots academy to the national education system by working alongside government.’

– **Alexandra Machado, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Girl MOVE Academy**

Context

Mozambique has introduced key reforms to empower girls and women, including a 2019 law banning child marriage under age 18. But shifting social norms takes time, and rates of early marriage and pregnancy remain high and continue to constrain girls’ futures.

Project

Girl MOVE Academy’s awarded project, *Unblocking Girls’ Education and Opportunities through New Reference Models*, tackles structural barriers, harmful gender norms, stereotypes and social isolation that limits girls’ and young women’s potential. Using an innovative education and intergenerational mentorship model, it cultivates female leaders who drive inclusive change and expand girls’ access to education.

Focusing on leadership and changemaking, the project connects adolescent girls with older peers through experiential learning, grassroots immersion, and sisterhood circles, fostering systemic transformation.

Impact

Each year, the programme supports 1,500 girls and young women from ten communities in Nampula, northern Mozambique, helping them stay in school and develop changemaker skills. Central to the academy is a cohort of over 300 Girl Movers – university graduates chosen for their leadership potential, learning ability, and integrity – who serve as role models, changemakers, and policy influencers in national and global organizations.

The programme’s methodology ensures each Girl Mover mentors 30 adolescent girls, guiding them academically and personally. Through a blend of in-person and digital initiatives, 32,000 adolescent girls are advancing their education, with pregnancy and marriage rates under 2% – far below the national average of 48% – and 90% transitioning to secondary education.

In partnership with Mozambique’s Ministry of Education and Culture, Girl MOVE adapted its methodology to the national education system and developed the Youth Changemakers’ Programme, which has the potential to reach one million students annually.

{reprograma}, Brazil

2021 laureate



‘We have trained hundreds more women, especially Black, trans, and low-income women, and placed them in technology careers.’

– **Carla de Bona, Executive Director, {reprograma}**

Context

Although women’s participation in Brazil’s tech sector is growing, they remain underrepresented in leadership and face limited access to entrepreneurial and investment opportunities. These gaps are even wider for women facing intersecting barriers related to race, gender identity, and socioeconomic status.

Project

{reprograma} was awarded for the project, *Reprogramming Brazil’s Technology Sector – Including Afro Descendants and Transgender Women*, which aims to close the gender gap in Brazil’s technology sector. It provides free training in coding and other in-demand digital skills to thousands of under-represented and low-income women and girls who do not have the support or financial means to pursue studies in this area. The project offers 18-week programming bootcamps, technical events and hackathons, with the goal of placing graduates in developer roles through hiring events with tech companies.

Impact

Since winning the Prize, {reprograma} has reached over 2,000 women and girls through training programmes and selection workshops, including over 700 participants in intensive bootcamps and over 1,900 through sensitization activities and introductory workshops in 2022 and 2023 alone. In 2023, 77% of women who completed intermediate-level courses secured employment within 6 months, with 71% working in technology roles.

The project’s inclusive selection process prioritizes access for women, who might otherwise be excluded from tech training opportunities. More than half of the graduates in 2022-23 self-identified as Black (Black and Brown), and up to 12% identified as transgender women or transvestites, underscoring the project’s strong commitment to traditionally excluded groups. All in-person events and courses are also made accessible to mothers.

Additionally, {reprograma} has established a dedicated team to support graduate placement in organizations and companies recognized for their outstanding diversity, equity and inclusive policies.

Girls Livelihood and Mentorship Initiative (GLAMI), United Republic of Tanzania

2022 laureate



‘Through Binti Shupavu, I learned many good things, including effective study techniques like creating a study schedule, which helps me study every day and understand better.’

– Sara, Morogoro Binti Scholar, Year 3

Context

The United Republic of Tanzania has increased girls’ access to education, but retention remains a significant challenge. While 95% of girls are enrolled in primary school, only 29% are enrolled in lower secondary and just 5% in tertiary education (UNESCO-UIS, 2025).

Project

The *Girls Livelihood and Mentorship Initiative (GLAMI)* was awarded for its work bridging school transitions for adolescent girls at risk of dropout in the United Republic of Tanzania. Through two flagship programmes, Binti Shupavu and Kisa, GLAMI helps girls safely progress through education levels, complete their education, and become confident leaders transforming their lives and communities. The Binti Shupavu (Courageous Daughters) programme offers a four-year life skills course for girls aged 12-18 in lower secondary school to build resilience and boost graduation rates. The Kisa (Story) programme prepares girls aged 16-20 for university with a two-year leadership course that empowers them to drive social change. Alumnae serve as mentors and teachers, with families and communities actively engaged.

Impact

In 2023, GLAMI expanded the Binti Shupavu programme to the Morogoro region, partnering with nine rural secondary schools to support 853 girls with life and leadership skills. The programme aims to build resilience and confidence, boost retention, and provide career guidance, preparing girls to continue their education or find meaningful employment. Weekly classes focus on personal leadership and life skills, contributing to increased graduation rates for vulnerable girls.

GLAMI social workers assisted 240 high-risk girls with scholastic materials, sanitary towels, and hostel or lunch fees to prevent dropout. Community engagement involved three meetings with 864 parents, 221 teachers, and nine school liaisons to strengthen collaboration in supporting girls’ rights and education.

Through group and one-on-one mentorship, the programme cultivated self-confidence and self-belief, enabling participants to express their views and contribute actively to decisions in their schools and their communities.

Room to Read, Cambodia

2022 laureate



‘We want all girls to grow, to dream and to ultimately change the world.’

– Vantha Chea, Country Director, Room to Read Cambodia

Context

Cambodia has made significant strides in girls’ education, with girls achieving higher completion rates than boys from primary through upper secondary levels (Malala Fund, 2025). Nevertheless, poverty and entrenched cultural norms continue to pose barriers to girls’ educational attainment.

Project

Room to Read Cambodia was awarded for its *Girls’ Education Programme* which transforms these systemic inequities by supporting girls aged 12-18 with transformative academic skills, life skills, community engagement and needs-based material support. The programme involves parents, communities, boys, and government stakeholders to nurture educated young women ready to lead in their families and communities. Beyond individual empowerment, it works to shift gender attitudes and dismantle the inequitable systems that perpetuate and sustain bias.

Impact

The programme has made a critical impact on teachers, government stakeholders, and adolescent girls and boys. Winning the Prize accelerated the integration of its activities into government systems during the 2022-23 school year.

Key achievements include two master trainings for 51 district officials across five provinces, enabling officials, school directors and deputy directors to facilitate the life skills curriculum and cascade training to school educators. Additionally, two rounds of school-level training reached 95 teachers across these provinces, equipping them to deliver the curriculum to girls. This progress has led to increased government cost-sharing – a vital milestone toward sustainable, systemic change.

‘The partnership between Room to Read and the Department significantly improved students’ learning. It fostered positive habits, and improved reading, self-awareness, communication, critical thinking, creativity, and decision-making skills. This improved academic performance, reduced dropouts, and increased secondary school completion,’ said Mr Pav Sothy, Director of the Department of Education, Youth, and Sports of Prey Veng province.

Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education (PAGE), Pakistan

2023 laureate



'I love all the schoolwork, English, Urdu and mathematics. I want to become a teacher one day.'

– Tamanna, 13, Star School student, Badia Rustum Khan, Islamabad district

Context

Pakistan has significantly increased enrolment for both girls and boys; however, about 12 million girls remain out of school – roughly 2 million more than boys – comprising the majority of the country's out-of-school population (UNESCO-UIS, 2025).

Project

The Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education (PAGE) was awarded for its *Star Schools Programme*, launched in 2016 to keep girls in school across Pakistan's most challenging contexts. The programme transforms mindsets, empowers girls and women, and strengthens communities through education. It trains community mobilizers to engage local influencers and parents using data to foster local ownership and policy-maker engagement. PAGE provides scholarships and digital and entrepreneurship skills training for older girls, and skills development for mothers. Innovative elements include mental health counselling, confidence-building sports activities, and the Feed a Paratha nutrition scheme, which employs local women to prepare fresh bread daily for students.

Impact

Receiving the UNESCO Prize in 2023 has been transformative for PAGE, strengthening its credibility and expanding both programmes and policy influence. In 2024, PAGE reached 33,504 girls, including Afghan and Rohingya refugees, through safe, inclusive Star Schools that combine academic learning, psychosocial support, and climate education.

A total of 462 teachers received training in mental health, nutrition, and digital skills, enhancing classroom quality in crisis-affected areas. Over 500 adolescent girls and women, including 360 Afghan refugees, completed entrepreneurship and skills training, with most launching businesses or becoming self-employed.

PAGE also partnered with the Ministry of Federal Education to publish a landmark report that informed policy reforms and contributed to the creation of the Girls Education Task Force, a platform uniting government and civil society to advance girls' education.

Together, these efforts are driving systemic change and inspiring broader investment in girls' learning and empowerment across Pakistan.

China Children and Teenagers' Fund (CCTF), China

2023 laureate



'We hope every girl can enjoy a brilliant life and build a brighter future.'

– Zhu Dongyun, Deputy Secretary-General, CCTF

Context

The project was founded in late 1980s when nine years of compulsory education was not yet fully implemented in China, and families still had to cover study fees and textbook costs – barriers that excluded many girls in rural and remote areas.

Project

The China Children and Teenagers' Fund (CCTF) was awarded for its *Spring Bud* project, launched in 1989 to promote equitable, inclusive and quality education for girls. The project works on the ground to mobilize schools and communities who identify girls in need of support with their education. A key innovation is the Spring Bud Sci-Tech Girl initiative for lower and upper secondary school girls, featuring an inclusive science and technology curriculum, study tours, and project-based sci-tech camps that build scientific and technological literacy, cultural confidence, and advanced skills.

Impact

The Prize has significantly strengthened the project's capacity to expand its social influence and support girls' holistic growth. It has raised awareness about gender equality among families and communities. Since receiving the Prize, the project has benefited 220,000 girls through schooling subsidies, provided technical training to around 6,000 girls, and offered individual psychological counselling to approximately 25,000 girls.

As another innovation, the project has also established over 100 Girls' Development Friendly Spaces in schools and communities, delivering STEM education and activities focused on girls' protection, adolescent health, and literacy development to support girls' growth.

The Spring Bud Dream Chorus has established 56 teams across 20 provincial-level regions in China. Centred on aesthetic education and dedicated to serving girls, the Chorus offers professional and systematic training to nurture girls' vocal talents and support their dreams of singing, empowering them to embrace a brighter future.

Promoting Equality in African Schools (PEAS), Uganda

2024 laureate



‘School is important for girls because when you educate a girl child, you educate the entire world.’

– Miriam, PEAS student

Context

Uganda has made notable progress in girls’ education, with over half of primary school students being girls and a youth female literacy rate of 93% (World Bank, 2025). However, challenges such as early marriage, teenage pregnancy, poverty, and geographic disparities continue to restrict educational opportunities for many girls.

Project

Promoting Equality in African Schools (PEAS) in Uganda was awarded for its *Empowering Schools for Adolescent Girls* project, which creates safe, gender-responsive school environments to empower marginalized adolescent girls in rural Uganda. The project operates a network of non-selective and inclusive secondary schools specializing in education for girls and underserved students. All PEAS-run schools feature gender-responsive infrastructure that safeguards girls’ health, safety, privacy and dignity. Teachers receive evidence-based, gender-transformative teacher training to better support girls’ needs, complemented by a holistic range of co-curricular activities such as life skills training and girls’ clubs.

Impact

PEAS has successfully adapted and scaled the project, directly impacting almost 300,000 students annually in Ghana, Uganda and Zambia. PEAS Uganda used Prize funds to engage female leaders, social and political influencers, and role models. This strengthened connections with local gender equality activists who inspired Girls’ Club members to pursue academic excellence, entrepreneurship, and social empowerment.

Club members received training in menstrual hygiene management, sanitation, environmental protection, and making reusable sanitary towels, which they taught to younger girls in primary schools. Sewing machines were provided to 30 clubs, enabling students to develop sewing skills and mend school uniforms. One upper secondary school is developing a hub for tailoring, garment making and weaving.

These skills, now part of Uganda’s curriculum, prepare girls for life beyond education, empowering them to later support their families and or start sewing businesses. PEAS secondary school girl students outperform their peers in mathematics and English by 23% and 11%, respectively.

Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), Zambia

2024 laureate



'I come from a big family of 11 that depended on small scale farming. That made me almost drop out of school. Through the CAMFED programme, I received the necessary support.'

– Chise, CAMFED Zambia graduate

Context

Zambia has made significant progress towards achieving gender equality in primary and secondary enrolment, with near parity attained and sustained over time (Universalis, 2019). Despite progress, child marriage remains a significant challenge to girls' educational attainment in Zambia.

Project

The Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) was awarded for its *Holistic Support for Girls to Complete and Succeed in Secondary School in Zambia* project, which transforms girls' education by providing a multi-level support system designed to empower them and expand their life opportunities. The project follows a three-level model: first, engaging schools and communities to deliver comprehensive support, particularly for girls at risk of dropping out; second, supporting girls' transition from school to meaningful employment; and third, partnering with government and policymakers to integrate these support structures into the national education system. Notable innovations include embedding climate change mitigation into the curriculum and offering Transition Guides to help girls and young women navigate the challenging time after completing school.

Impact

Over the past 32 years, CAMFED has enabled over 7.8 million children to access education. Its alumnae network – the CAMFED Association – has grown from 400 to over 313,000 women leaders across five countries, including 36,224 in Zambia. In 2014, bursaries were given to 21,150 girls to attend secondary school, while 32,469 more children benefited from CAMFED Association and community philanthropy initiatives.

Support goes beyond finances: in 61 districts, 65,698 children received social and learning support in government schools. CAMFED also helps young women transition to sustainable livelihoods – supporting 4,150 businesses founded by young women entrepreneurs in 2024.

To drive systemic change, CAMFED works with government to address the needs of the most marginalised girls. The Ministry of Education is integrating CAMFED's Learner Guide peer mentoring model into national systems to create more inclusive, supportive schools.

All Girls Code (AGC), Lebanon

2025 laureate



‘Attending All Girls Code events was both inspiring and empowering. My time spent at the Techsplore events offered valuable insights and a strong sense of community.’

– Lara Ghazzawi, All Girls Code event participant

Context

In Lebanon and across the world, girls and young women face systemic barriers to accessing quality STEM education, worsened by economic instability, displacement, and underinvestment in youth-led initiatives. These challenges are even greater for girls from refugee and underserved communities.

Project

All Girls Code (AGC) is a youth- and volunteer-led initiative providing free, accessible tech-immersive education to girls aged 10–22+ across Lebanon, the Arab States, and the Global South. Since 2017, AGC has empowered over 2,500 girls through hybrid programmes that combine coding, leadership, and mentorship, with a focus on refugee inclusion, accessibility, and community-based learning. Rooted in human-centred design and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, AGC hosts annual hackathons and solution-driven events. Despite major crises, AGC has sustained its programmes, and received major recognition.

Impact

AGC plans to leverage the Prize to expand in-person programmes across Lebanon by decentralizing activities and funding transportation and event costs for underprivileged students. The primary focus will be girls aged 10 to 18 attending public and low-income private schools. A cross-subsidy model will also be explored – offering paid programmes to economically privileged students to help finance free access for underserved communities.

Currently reliant on volunteers, AGC aims to use the prize to hire key full-time staff, enhancing organizational capacity and sustainability. Prize funds will also support operational needs, including hiring a curriculum expert and acquiring essential technology such as laptops and robotics kits. Curricula will be updated to incorporate the latest developments in AI and digital literacy, with an emphasis on culturally-responsive content.

Finally, on the digital front, AGC plans to create a free, regionally tailored resource hub for girls across the Global South.

Nashipai Maasai Community Projects, Kenya

2025 laureate



‘Now, my journey has become a source of strength and advocacy, and inspires other young girls to speak up and take action.’

– Maria Nepapa, Intern, Nashipai Maasai Community Projects

Context

Kenya has achieved progress in extending access to pre-primary and primary education in remote and disadvantaged communities. However, in pastoral Maasai areas, high dropout rates persist due to a perceived low value of schooling, long distances to schools, and elevated rates of child marriage (Marty, 2024).

Project

The Nashipai Maasai Community Projects NGO was awarded for its *Girls for Change – Empowering Maasai Girls through Education and Advocacy* project. Founded in 2017, this youth-led initiative advances education for Kenya’s Indigenous Maasai girls. Starting with the rehabilitation of Naningoi Primary School, enrolment grew from 30 to 335 and now supports over 1,200 girls across three schools. Rooted in Indigenous leadership, the project addresses female genital mutilation, child marriage, and harmful gender norms through scholarships, life skills, mentorship, and community engagement. Over 3,000 girls have been supported, improving attendance, retention, and progression to higher education. Nashipai also runs advocacy campaigns, psychosocial support, and regenerative agriculture—establishing 200 kitchen gardens and three food forests, and training 2,000+ women in permaculture. Through 102 community dialogues and global outreach reaching 10,000+ people, the project fosters inclusive, safe spaces.

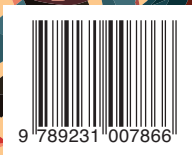
Impact

Nashipai Maasai Community Projects plans to use its prize money to expand the Girls for Change programme to 15 additional schools, train 100 teachers in gender-responsive pedagogy, and establish a digital learning lab for girls in Narok County, a predominantly Maasai area. It will also support the development of a community-led advocacy toolkit and the training of 50 new youth champions. This expansion is expected to benefit over 2,500 girls and strengthen local systems for long-term impact on girls’ education.

The Prize will help provide scholarships, uniforms, sanitary products, and school supplies to ensure vulnerable girls remain in school and complete their education. It will also support the delivery of sexual and reproductive health education, life skills, and leadership development. Additional activities include community dialogues, local champion trainings, and school-based food security initiatives such as kitchen gardens and food forests. Impact will be captured through digital storytelling and participatory evaluations to inform future programming and advocacy.

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