



Final Report on COL Women & Girls Training

180 Women and Girls Training

C21-267

July 2021

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1. Background and Objectives

The unemployment rates are higher for women than for men, and are acute for youth between the ages of 15-24 years. SchoolNet SA, in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning has embarked on a project that focuses on out of school women and girls aged between 18 and 35 to participate in a digital literacy programme. The aim of this project is to create awareness of digital technologies, provide access to entrepreneurial and education resources, facilitate soft or essential skills to build confidence, digital skills and opportunities for certification to open up employment and entrepreneurial income avenues. There are two aspects to this initiative. The first is an intervention for 30 women and girls from one locality to receive training in 10 workshops, and the second is for 150 women and girls to attend 10 workshops from across the country.

2. Overview of Achievements

2.1 Technology Access, Venue and Data



The training sessions were offered to a total number of 303 women and girls from across South Africa. This total is comprised of the 29 girls from model 1 (30 Girls Cohort) and 274 unique participants from the 150 girls model.

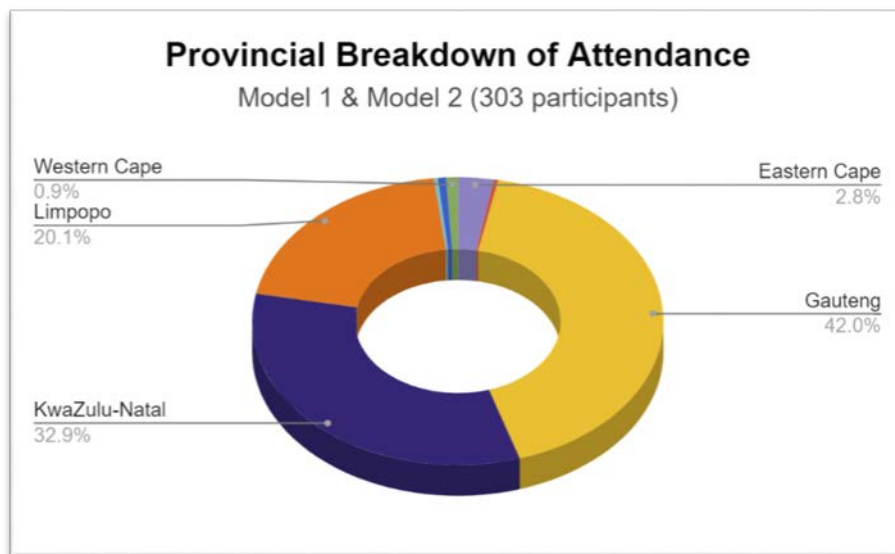
Model 1- 30 girls from one locality: The selected venue for this programme was Vulindlela Education Centre in an area called Taylor's Halt, in the KwaZulu Natal Province. The centre is used as a hub by out of school youth, students and teachers who use the computer laboratory and the library.

Model 2 focused our efforts on the remainder of South Africa and hosted a mix of online and face to sessions. The training comprised seven sessions hosted in virtual environments, with four sessions facilitated in a face to face setting. Face to Face sessions were required in rural areas as participants needed more support and coaching during the programme. Model 2 required that 150 girls participate in the programme, however this target was surpassed with a total of 274 participants. Most participants in model 2, used their personal cell phones and/or laptops to connect to the virtual training offerings, while some girls accessed virtual sessions in their school computer laboratories.

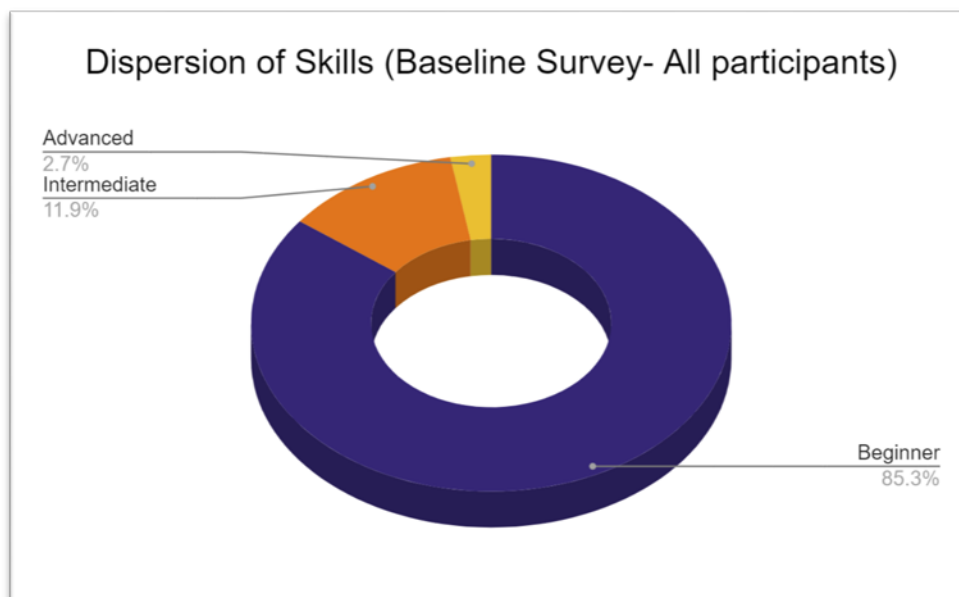
2.2 Participants

The Digital Literacy for women and girls programme targeted women and girls aged between 15-34 and were a mix of being in and out of school. About 55% of the participants were reportedly still in school, some were studying at Higher Education Institutions and others seeking job opportunities. Below is a chart showing the provincial break down of the women and girls for the project.

The graph is indicative that the majority of our participants in the programme hailed from Gauteng Province (42%), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (33%) and Limpopo Province (20%). These are the most populous provinces and displays a great need for development.



The women and girls' self-reported course evaluation indicated a wide range of digital literacy skills from entry to advanced level. The majority of the girls reported that they were at a Beginner (85%) ICT Skills Level, 12% were at an Intermediate Level and 3% at an Advanced Level. The above 80% at Beginner level was an indicator that the COL programme was timely and in need.



3. Overview of Training

The 180 girls and women programme scope was for twenty training workshops. Participants were invited to training sessions using a mix of modes, including SchoolNet’s social media platforms, community centres and via instant messaging and email. Three overarching categories of programmes were offered through Personal Branding and Essential Skills, Digital Literacy and lastly Coding & Technical Skills. The latter required hands on practice and therefore in person facilitators were in person to guide the sessions and offer immediate support. The Computer troubleshooting and maintenance training had to be move into an online offering as South Africa moved into a higher COVID-19 Lockdown Level 4, where all schools were closed until 26 July 2021.

3.1 Attendance Summary

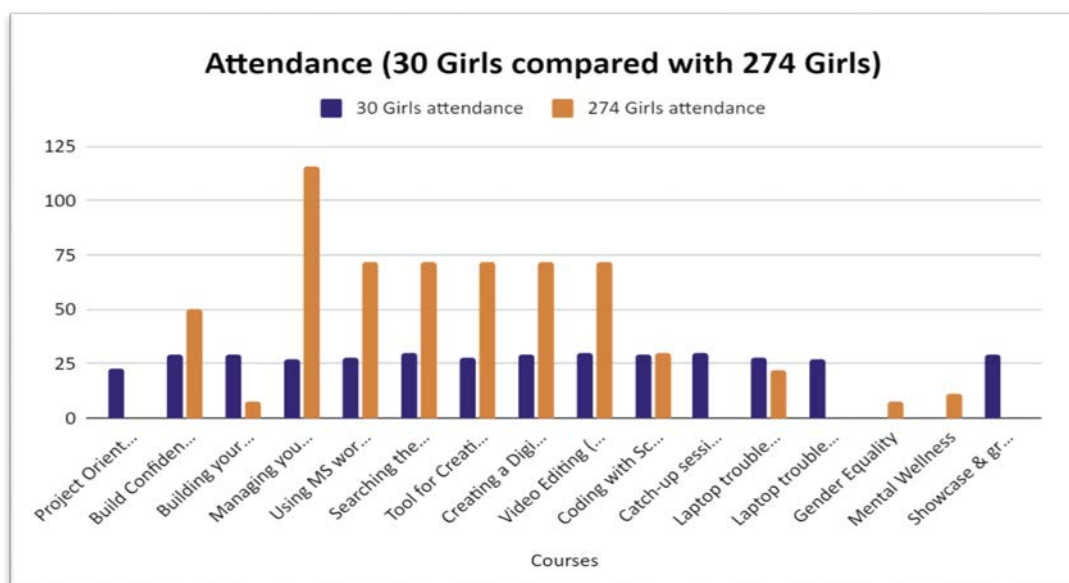
Model 1: 30 Girls/Women

A total of 29 girls from the 30 girls successfully completed the program which consisted of 14 face to face workshops. There was a high level of attendance with over 94% attendance of all workshops with an average attendance of 28 (of 30).

Model 2: 150 Girls

In this model, we had 318 participants of which 274 were unique participants. This far surpassed our expectation of 150 women/girls for model 2. Of these participants, the majority of participants attended on average one workshop, however it was rewarding to note that 5% of participants joined multiple workshop sessions.

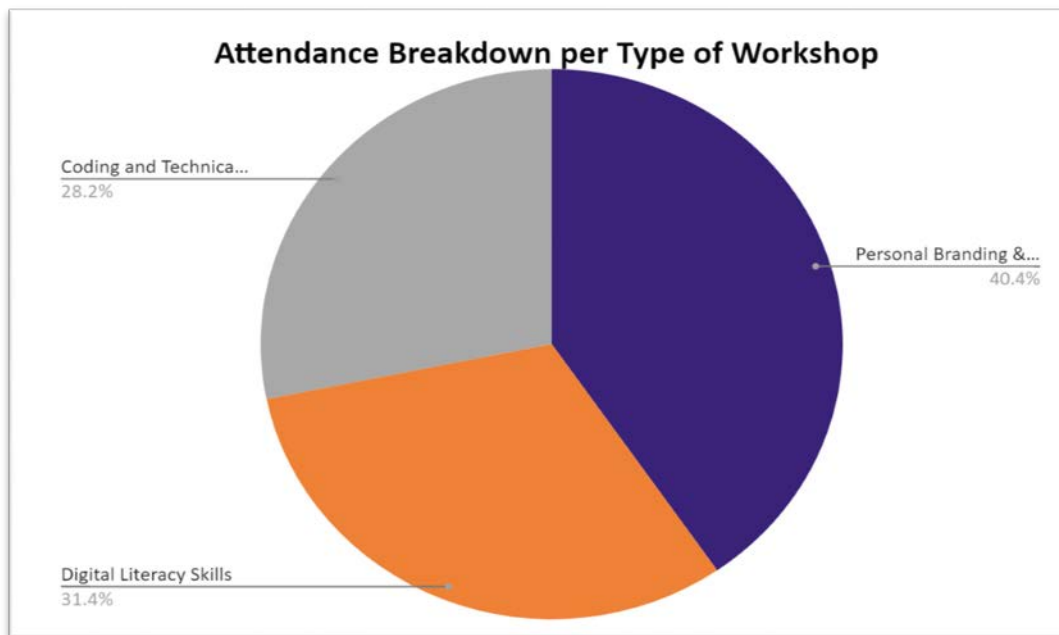
The graph below is a comparative display of attendance for model 1 and model 2 participants. Whilst Model 1 is indicative of stable attendance throughout all sessions, whereas Model 2 showed a clear interest in Managing Digital Footprints, Basic literacy on Office Productivity applications such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint as well as Confidence building topics.



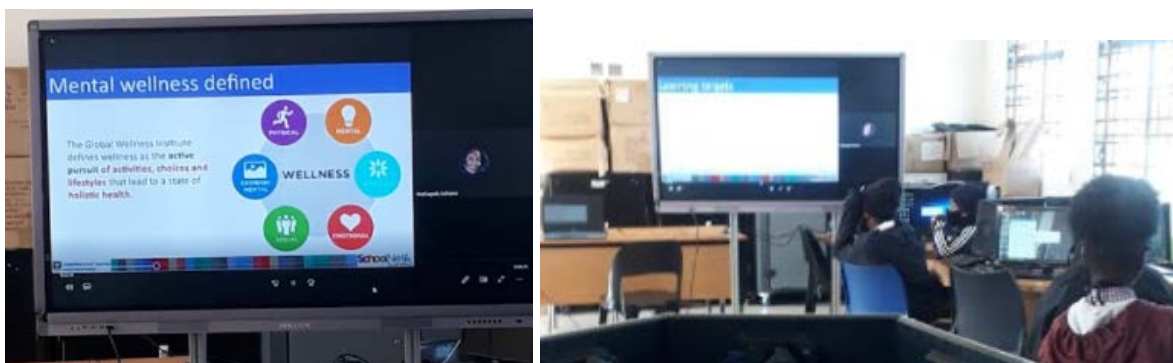
A Record of attendance is summarised below:

Date	Name Of the Session	No. of sessions	30 girls Attendance	No. of sessions	150 girls attendance
14 Apr 21	Project Orientation	01	23	-	-
21 Apr 21	Build confidence to thrive	01	29	02	50
22 Apr 21	Building your online brand	01	29	01	08
28 Apr 21	Managing your Digital Footprint	01	27	02	117
26 May 21	Advocate for Gender Equality	00	-	01	08
15 Jun 21	Mental Wellness	00	-	01	11
29 Apr 21	Using Ms Word to build my CV (Easy steps)	01	28	00	-
05 May 21	Searching the web (Easy steps)	01	30	00	-
06 May 21	Tool for creating a personal budget (Easy steps)	01	28	00	-
12 May 21	Creating a digital story using PowerPoint	01	29	00	-
13 May 21	Video editing (Easy steps)	01	30	00	-
06 Jun 21	Easy Steps 1 (Internet, Word, Excel, PowerPoint)	00	-	01	35
19 Jun 21	Easy Steps 2 (Internet, Word, Excel, PowerPoint)	00	-	01	37
19 May 21	Coding with Scratch	01	29	01	30
20 May 21	Catch-up session	01	30	00	-
22 May 21	Computer troubleshooting & maintenance part 1	01	28	01	22
23 May 21	Computer troubleshooting & maintenance part 2	01	27	00	-
17 Jun 21	Showcase and graduation	01	29	00	-
	TOTAL	14 sessions	396	11 sessions	316
	Average attendance		28		27

The chart below indicates that the majority of participants found the Personal Branding & Essential Skills theme of workshops most interesting with a recorded 40.4% attendance. Personal branding and Essential skills were designed to provide awareness of self, support for improving communication skills and being more analytical in daily practice. Digital Literacy skills, had a 31.4% interest, with a focus on Applications and mastery of skills in the use of applications. Whilst the baseline survey indicated a high interest for the Coding and Technical Skills workshops and scheduled to be face to face workshops, the COVID-19 protocols for limited gatherings, posed a challenge as the closure of schools and education centres prevented access to communities. This resulted in 28.2% attendance.



3.2 Training Workshops

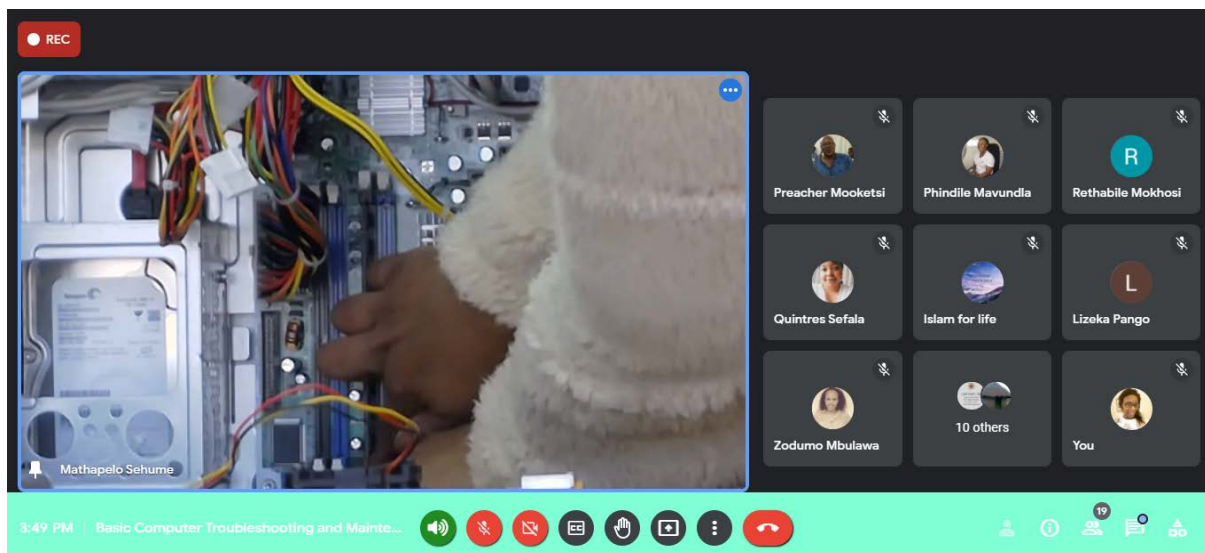


As documented in previous reports, twenty training sessions were planned and completed. In fact, 5 additional sessions were hosted as part of the programme due to the expressed need.

Of note though was the last workshop aimed at providing basic technical knowledge and hands-on learning opportunities to solve computer challenges. There was a high number of

women and girls who showed interest in this workshop and included girls still in school. This was an indicator that the majority of young people realize that there is a high demand for these skills for the future. A total of three workshops were offered to 77 women and girls. Two face to face sessions were conducted at Ekukhanyeni Special School in the Model 1 program. Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions the face to face session for the 150 women, had to be completed as a virtual session.

The virtual session focused on sharing tips on how to work safely with physical components of a computer. A general overview of hardware preceded how to build a computer from scratch. During the discussions, basic computer hardware troubleshooting techniques were explored. This session was a foundation for creating awareness for women to learn skills that are typically considered “male skills” and to encourage young girls, in particular, to pursue careers in a range of IT fields. One of the girls’ comments succinctly captures the value of this workshop when she reported, *“It’s not only men with technical support who can do the troubleshooting and maintenance even women using laptops and hard drives can learn and earn skills”*



4. Mentorship, Coaching and Community Support

The facilitator led training sessions for the 30 girls ended with a high note on the 23rd of May 2021, however it was humbly to note that collaboration continued in the WhatsApp group. The girls shared ideas with each other of their implementation plans moving forward and highlighted their achievements. Below are snippets of various interactions within the WhatsApp group:

A few ladies from the Model 1 30 girls got together and planned an initiative to campaign against child abuse at a rural Primary School in their area. They encouraged learners at the school to speak up and refuse to be victims of abuse as this has long term effects in one's adulthood. Ms Neliswa Makhasa reported that during her talk at Umqhathi Primary school, her love for children was invigorated and wishes to pursue a career in teaching.



Awareness campaign on child abuse at UMQHATHI PRIMARY SCHOOL on a children's safety week... when we say they should learn to overcome fear and speak out for themselves.... with STHEMBILE ...SAMUKELISIWE AND BONGEKA

13:58

SchoolNet SA established a Women and girls Facebook group to provide coaching and mentoring opportunities to expand the peer network and thereby ensured sustained support, particularly, for the 180 women and girls who participated in the Digital Literacy program. This Facebook group provides additional development and resources to achieve emotional and economic self-sufficiency. The ultimate goal was for every young woman to find their voice, defines their dreams and move forward in the world with pride and self-confidence. The group is steadily gaining momentum with over 200 members.

SchoolNet SA shared a link.
Admin · 16 July at 15:09 · 🌐

"Wellness is a holistic integration of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, fueling the body, engaging the mind, and nurturing the spirit" - Debbie L. Stoewen

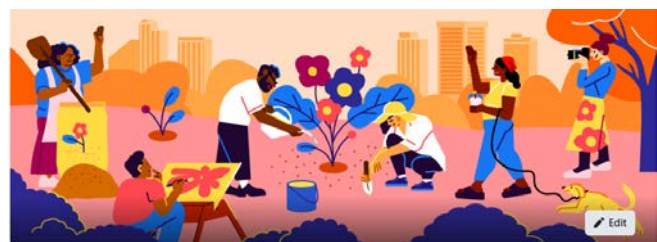
Read more about the Dimensions of wellness: Change your habits, change your life
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5508938/>

How do you take care of yourself and your well-being?... See more

NCBI.NLM.NIH.GOV
Dimensions of wellness: Change your habits, change your life
People often think about wellness in terms of physical health — nutrition, exercise, weight management, etc., but it is so much more....

PMC

14 2 comments Seen by 115



SchoolNet Women and Girls

Private group · 204 members



Joined + Invite

Success Stories

The photos and a story below show girls' appreciation and implementation of their learning in their daily activities after the workshops had been completed. This attests to the value of the program.

"Dear Commonwealth of Learning and SchoolNet South Africa, I'm forever grateful for the opportunity As a young Girl from a society where we are not exposed to computers and didn't even get a chance at school to learn about a thing about computer on how to use them and how to troubleshoot if maybe your computer decides not to work. I learned a lot, I can even type my CV now and save money and time because there's no need for an internet Cafe. I was introduced to many things and even created a blog. I now have a Blog where I share my experiences of my life and my favorite part was Coding with Scratch and in future I would like to study coding and be able to program my own projects. It was a great experience of my life...what you did for us is a golden opportunity every girl would wish for that opportunity, may you never stop changing lives and opening opportunities for young girls like us who are unfortunate - THANK YOU."

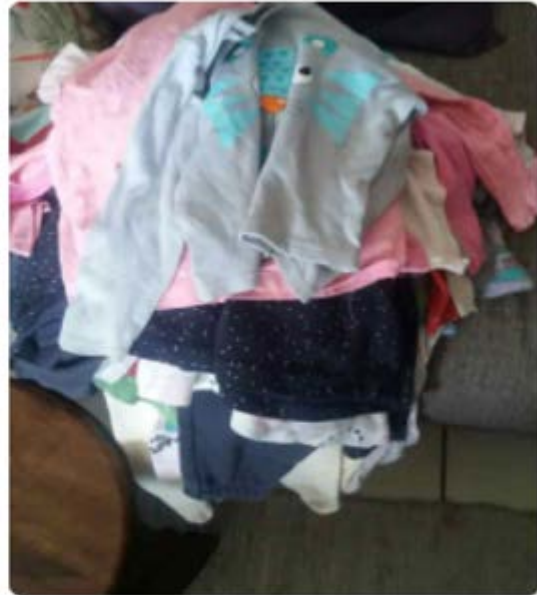
THIS IS HOW WE CHECK THE SEED THAT IS GOING TO GROW WHEN WE PLANT IT.



Col Nqobile Precious C



#doityourself #nomorehunger.we small group of women.we want plant our vegetable and sell them in affordable price 08:29



Kuyi Youth day I was cleaning my wardrobe and I came across these clothes which no longer fits my kids, instead of burning them I decided to give it to the needy family. Its not much but I'm glad ngikwazile Ukusiza 😊 19:23

"If I didn't participate in the women and girls programme, I wouldn't be where I am...Having confidence and be able to approach people was the most of my achievements and to be in a business industry was my opportunity thanks to schoolnet - now I'm out of the box, I'm true in myself." By Nefiswa Makhwasa

Col Xolisile D

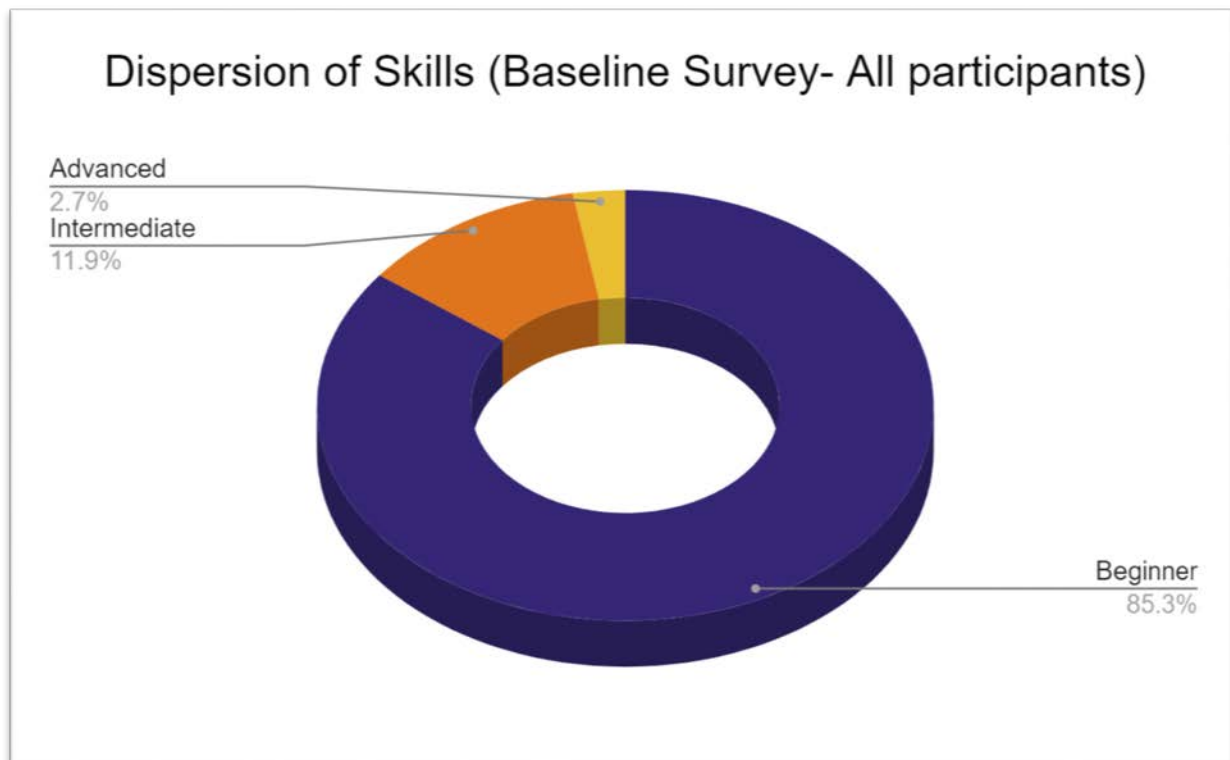


#operation keep your area clean 06:34

5. Skills and Competencies

SchoolNet was tasked to customize a training programme for the 180 women and girls which would include essential skills & confidence building, motivation from women in ICT, being safe online and media literacy, digital literacy providing practical application of productivity software, orientation into different types of coding and how to do basic maintenance on computers.

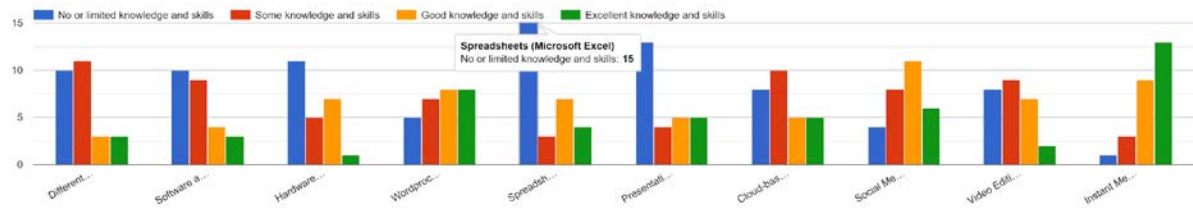
For the model 1 participants, an initial and Endline survey were implemented to understand participants' initial skills and whether participants gained the skills envisioned at the end of the programme. The surveys were designed using Google forms and a link to the form was sent through the Course WhatsApp group. All the 30 girls participants completed the survey available here: <https://tinyurl.com/kzsr79b2>



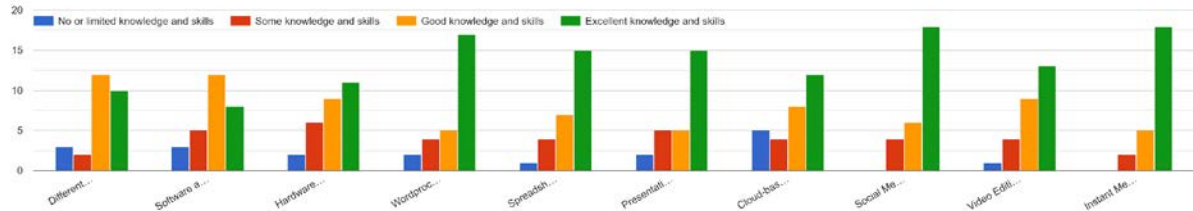
The graph below is representative of 30 girls' self-assessment and depicts the girls' view of their skills Before and After the course. In the categories of Different operating systems, Software applications, Hardware components of a computer, the majority of girls indicated that *Before the course* they had no or limited knowledge. In the categories of Digital Literacy skills, the majority of girls reflected that they possessed some knowledge and skills. We are pleased to note that the *After the course* questions displayed that the majority of girls had moved from little or some knowledge and skills to Good and Excellent knowledge and skills.

The graphs below display the BEFORE and AFTER report of the participants self assessment in their growth of skills. It is pleasing to note that in almost all category responses, the BEFORE indicator was mostly NO or LIMITED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS, whereas the AFTER picture displays most participants had progressed to EXCELLENT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS. This report by participants is indicative of the value programmes such as these have for participants who have limited exposure to digital education.

BEFORE attending this course, what was YOUR KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS in each of the options below



AFTER attending this course, what was YOUR KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS in each of the options below



The surveys for the 274 women and girls were somewhat more challenging as there wasn't a dedicated audience throughout all sessions. The sporadic attendance made it difficult to measure the progress of skills achieved. Despite the Endline survey not being possible, we have managed to capture the thoughts and learnings from a sample of participants.
 * Comments are pasted directly from the survey, in participants own words.

Having a confidence to promote and believe on myself	Let people know where you stand and believe on what you are doing
Post positive things	Behavior and expression is important
Change my behaviour regarding media and improve my connectivity regarding media	To be positive and to read every little information before accepting anything else in media
What I post on social media The sites i visit	I think the training was good, not information overload in one session.
I need to be more private.	I enjoyed today thank you for this opportunity
The way I use social media	This is a very good program , especially for learners at schools.
Posting unnecessary thing that will make my profile bad	Gender equality is when people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities
Able to teach learners to code	It is equal anf fair access to opportunities and resources irrespective of the gender status.
Play around with scratch	How to type and save documents in Microsoft
The perception that coding is difficult	Google, MS word, excel, and PowerPoint
We can also do it practically in our phones	Microsoft word, Excel and PowerPoint
Add Scratch to our lessons	Microsoft office skills
How to implement successfully in a classroom	Typing skills,browsing and digital literacy
I am totally new in this programme so everything is much appreciated	I have learned about word, excel and PowerPoint I can create things using those tools
I will improve my coding	How to use microsoft PowerPoint,Word,Excel
Nothing to change and improve so far	How to use microsoft office and the basics of internet
Different words describing masculine and feminine gentleness and physical strengths	Microsoft office
Awareness of the gender roles eyc	I learnt about cyberbullying and Microsoft office
How gender roles in our societies perpetuates violence.	How to use a computer,microsoft word,excel and power point
Equality is a very vast subject	I have learnt how to use a computer as it was for my first time using one
How to promote wellness	I have learnt how to use a computer and to create curriculum vitae
You need to love yourself Build yourself mentally There's a power above you that can be with you through your difficulties, therefore you are not alone.	How to use laptop with knowledge including social interests and Google mail importance
It's not shameful to stress.	To type letters and about cyber crimes
I have learnt more on the shocking state of mental health and different kinds of stress	I have learnt how to interpret different types of graphs How to make reports How to draft a budget
You can open up to someone if you have stress	I have learnt to draft my CV
Mental health is not about the abstance of mental illness	To type letters about cyber crime

TODAY I HAVE LEARNT ABOUT MENTAL WELLNESS	It'll be important in the future when you enter the professional world.
IVE LEARNED THAT MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS HELPS US TO REFRESH OUR MINDS	Cyber crime
I've learnt how to use Microsoft office	How to write a CV and cover letter
I have learnt to draft different types of graphs, to draw budget and calculate income and outcome	I have learned and managed to expand my experience on PowerPoint presentations, excel, and how to type using Word even to convert documents from Word to pdf
I have learnt how to write a CV also learnt about cyber crime	I have learnt how to budget on a computer, and use word document, PowerPoint and plot graph and pie charts
On how to use a computer, Microsoft word, excel and PowerPoint	How to use Microsoft office
To type letters and about cyber crime	I have learnt how to use Microsoft word, Excel and PowerPoint
To take pictures and typing using laptop	How to Draw a budget and its importance and about cyber crime
I learnt more about the calculation	I have learnt how to use Microsoft word, Excel and PowerPoint
How to draw graphs and pie chart.learn more about creating CV , letter of application	I have learnt that whenever I post on social media, I must consider other people's feeling and I must be careful that it does not backfire
To improve a way of learning technically on the social media	I LEARNED HOW TO MAKE A SLIDE AND PRESENTATION USING A COMPUTER
I have learned to make slideshow	I have learnt about cyber bullying
Coping with everyday struggles	How dangerous is cyber bullying and how social media can destroy your future
I understand that mental wellness is more than just the absence of mental illness and that it how well do you balance your work.	How to make graphs,presentations and typing
Mental wellness means being able to control your emotions,dealing with situations and not having mental illness	To not post everything about me on social media platforms
Activities and lifestyles	To have a positive attitude and to build resilience
I UNDERSTAND MENTAL WELLNESS BECAUSE IT TALKS ABOUT SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL	The active pursuit of activities , choices and lifestyle that lead to state of holistic health
	I UNDERSTAND THAT MENTAL WELLNESS IS SOMETHING THAT MAKE YOU FEEL FREE

6. Certification and Assessment

The 29 girls who successfully completed the programme received Digital Literacy Certificate during the Showcase and Certification event which was held on the 17th of June 2021 at Vulindlela Education Centre.



The event started with a showcase presented by each girl, sharing their learning and how the program has benefited them. Photographs and some videos of presentations available here: <https://tinyurl.com/sw4x5ph4>.



The 52 girls from the 150 girls program, who successfully completed Easy Steps Digital Skills course were awarded with certificates available here: <https://tinyurl.com/j5u67p75>

6. Challenges & Recommendations

Access to devices posed an additional challenge, as many youth do not have their own digital devices with data. We tried to alleviate this by contacting community centres in rural areas to host connected sessions. This too provided challenges as in some instances there weren't sufficient devices and in other cases stable connectivity let us down. Whilst this is not a challenge that can be solved by one project, we continue to explore opportunities to host training in areas where there is access to infrastructure after training.

COVID-19 also posed challenges as with lockdown measures in place, schools and education centres were closed to the public and thus presented challenges of access to communities that could have been approached. With the vaccination programme underway, there is hope that lockdowns will not inhibit training in the future.

Activity challenges were given to both groups of 30 girls and 150 women and girls at the end of each session to complete in order to practice and apply skills and knowledge learnt. Some of the girls reported various challenges in completing the tasks such as access to devices, poor network. The SchoolNet facilitator made an effort to collect artefacts from participants during the face to face digital skills workshop, however online workshops did not allow for activities to be completed during the workshop sessions.

Completion of surveys were a challenge for the 150 participants for different reasons. Technology access and connectivity were the overarching reasons, however with the 150 girls there was an added challenge of participants attending sessions in a very sporadic fashion. Participants were not able to show progress of skills and competencies due to not attending sessions regularly. Future projects need to evaluate whether depth of skills (model 1) or breadth and awareness of skills is more valuable. This project has highlighted that different models can achieve different goals.

6. Reflection from Participants

The participants had the following to say about their experience of the programme:

"I learnt about identity insecurities, how one describes herself based on what they do, what people say or what they have. I learnt that confidence is showing certainty about oneself, knowing yourself without doubts."

"I would say my confidence/self esteem has grew because of these sessions I now know that many women and go through the same difficulties as me."

"I want to have more confidence; I want to remove the uncertainty when I want to embark on a new experience."

"To develop or improve who we are as individuals"

"To try and believing in myself and be more confident"

"Take responsibility for yourself. Experiment life. Develop an action plan and implement it."

"Personal online brand is about knowing who you are as a person and what you want."

"The importance of personal branding and how to go about branding your profile"

"I've learnt that our social interactions are sometimes a hindrance to our success. Not everything deserves to be seen/heard by the people you interact with."

"Posting unnecessary thing that will make my profile bad"

"I learnt about identity insecurities, how one describes herself based on what they do, what people say or what they have. I learnt that confidence is showing certainty about oneself, knowing yourself without doubts."

"I am new with scratch, and started teaching it to grade 7's. I was unsure how to present tasks, but when the example of a challenge came up my question was answered."

"I do know it is vital for the 4 skills required for humans who live in the 4th industrial revolution. I know it teaches learners to think, plan and learn how to work towards a goal."

"How gender roles in our societies perpetuates violence."

"Unlearning the discrimination of people based on their gender"

"I have learned and managed to expand my experience on PowerPoint presentations, excel, and how to type using Word even to convert documents from Word to pdf"

"How to make graphs, presentations and typing"

"How to use a computer, Microsoft word, excel and powerpoint"

"How to use laptop with knowledge including social interests and Google mail importance"

"I have learnt more on the shocking state of mental health and different kinds of stress"

"I have learnt that i should train my mind to think in a health way"

"I learnt how to take care of our mental health"

7. Conclusion

The scope of the project was to encourage women and girls in South Africa in various aspects of Information technology which included Digital Literacy, Coding, Hardware and Software maintenance and importantly to also foster self-esteem, confidence and other essential skills necessary for post schooling. SchoolNet was tasked with facilitating 20 workshops incorporating two models to provide diverse participation from women and girls across South Africa. We are proud to indicate that the 180 Women and Girls programme has been successful in its implementation.

SchoolNet was able to facilitate five workshops in addition to the twenty required courses. The courses were a blend of online and face to face workshops with a total of 303 women and girls benefitting from the programme. This achievement showcases 168% completion of the project target which had expected 180 participants.

Overall the project provided youth an opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills to compete in the labour market. They learned socio-emotional and life skills necessary to navigate and adapt to a changing world. This project enabled women and girls from poor income households which lack resources to pay for post-schooling development and opportunity to participate in timely skills. The Commonwealth of Learning has indeed empowered women and girls through this project and we are hugely appreciated of this amazing opportunity.

Omashani Naidoo

SchoolNet South Africa

www.schoolnet.org.za

Annexure 1: Source Verification

30 Girls Source Verification links	150 Girls Source Verification links
<p>1. Attendance record: https://tinyurl.com/wshy66m4</p>	<p>12. Attendance record: https://tinyurl.com/fbtbnsd7</p>
<p>2. 30 Girls Baseline survey responses: https://tinyurl.com/26ebrm6s</p>	<p>13. 150 Girls Baseline survey responses: https://tinyurl.com/vx6z37k</p>
<p>3. 30 Girls Endline survey responses: https://tinyurl.com/kzsr79b2</p>	<p>14. 150 Girls Endline survey responses: https://tinyurl.com/2cydnkb5</p>
<p>4. Workshop Photographs: https://tinyurl.com/yf47bk85</p>	<p>15. Workshop Photographs: https://tinyurl.com/8u5cudtr</p>
<p>5. 30 Girls Reflection videos: https://tinyurl.com/pc4rthka</p>	<p>16. Interview reflection videos: https://tinyurl.com/76hs3z6e</p>
<p>6. Workshop Activities: https://tinyurl.com/njswfc64</p>	<p>17. Workshop Activities: https://tinyurl.com/3mn6afxy</p>
<p>7. Assessment of Activities: https://tinyurl.com/kt3mbcvz</p>	<p>18. Assessment of Activities: https://tinyurl.com/96ze2eed</p>
<p>8. 30 Girls Course Certificates: https://tinyurl.com/3ttr6rnw</p>	<p>19. Digital Skills Certificates: https://tinyurl.com/j5u67p75</p>
<p>9. Technology access and list of venues: https://tinyurl.com/4bduedyx</p>	<p>20. Technology access and list of venues: https://tinyurl.com/fka82cw7</p>
<p>10. Professional social media platforms: https://tinyurl.com/adjw8dun</p>	
<p>11. 30 girls Media Release Forms: https://tinyurl.com/45ukda27</p>	