

Girls4Tech looks to empower the next generation of problem-solvers

Coinciding with International Day of the Girl Child, Mastercard recently launched the African leg of its Girls4Tech programme at Sandtonview Primary School in Johannesburg. Girls4Tech aims to drive interest in and awareness of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) studies and careers among primary school girls aged 10, 11 and 12.



Girls4Tech launch at Sandtonview Primary School

The hands-on, inquiry-based programme connects Mastercard's payment technology business to STEM principles and shows students that it takes all kinds of interests and skills to pursue a STEM career.

Since its launch in April 2014 in the United States, Girls4Tech has reached 30,000 girls and engaged 1,700+ employees in 17 countries. Girls4Tech hopes to inspire young girls to build the skills they need in STEM to become problem solvers and the leaders of tomorrow. It also aims to ensure that women have a voice in the development of the products and services of the future, including Mastercard's payments solutions.

Jobs of the future

"Global stats show that 80% of jobs created in the next decade will require some combination of STEM skills. Yet only 30% of the science and technology workforce is currently comprises women," says Anton van der Merwe, head of market development, Mastercard South Africa. "With this programme, we aim to develop a strong pipeline of talent for the technology jobs of the future and encourage girls to embrace subjects that will prepare them for financially and intellectually satisfying roles in the workforce of tomorrow."

With three stations based on algorithms, digital convergence and cryptology, the South African workshop brings to life the real-world applications of classroom maths and science lessons. Mastercard employees serve as mentors and role models, and guide participants through the exercises.

Since Sandtonview, the programme has run in Cape Town at John Graham Primary School and Vanguard Primary School. Between the three schools, Mastercard volunteers reached around 270 South African girls.

“Our curriculum gives concrete examples of how we apply science and maths in a practical way in our business,” says van der Merwe. “By providing real life and hands-on activities for each concept, the programme shows that being friendly, enthusiastic, mathematical, artistic, scientific, logical and even creative are all skills that connect to a STEM career.”



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