

# Great Girls prepares vulnerable young women for success after school

According to PwC, if we closed the gender gap by just 10% (from a pay and representation perspective), that could catalyse an additional 3.2% in GDP growth and reduce unemployment by 6.5%. Great Girls aims to make a difference by preparing vulnerable young women from disadvantaged backgrounds for the world of work. It's run by women, for women, as a catalyst for incremental and sustainable change.



Image source: [Facebook](#)

Kristina Miller, founder of Great Girls, says, "There are so many people out there looking for work. They have many more opportunities than a girl from a disadvantaged area. They have better schooling, tuition, job shadowing, open day excursions, personality assessments etc. All of this is needed to bridge the poverty gap to get a chance to succeed."

## Bridging the gap

To date, 40 Great Girls mentors have assisted 120 girls. The NPO helps bridge the gap between high school education and full-time employment by assisting grade 11 and 12 girls with setting up CVs, mastering interview skills, learning to budget, and being assertive and self-assured. This way, it gives girls a set of skills to build upon, for the best chance of gainful employment or a bursary for further studies. Most importantly, it gives them the space and confidence to imagine what they want their futures to look like.

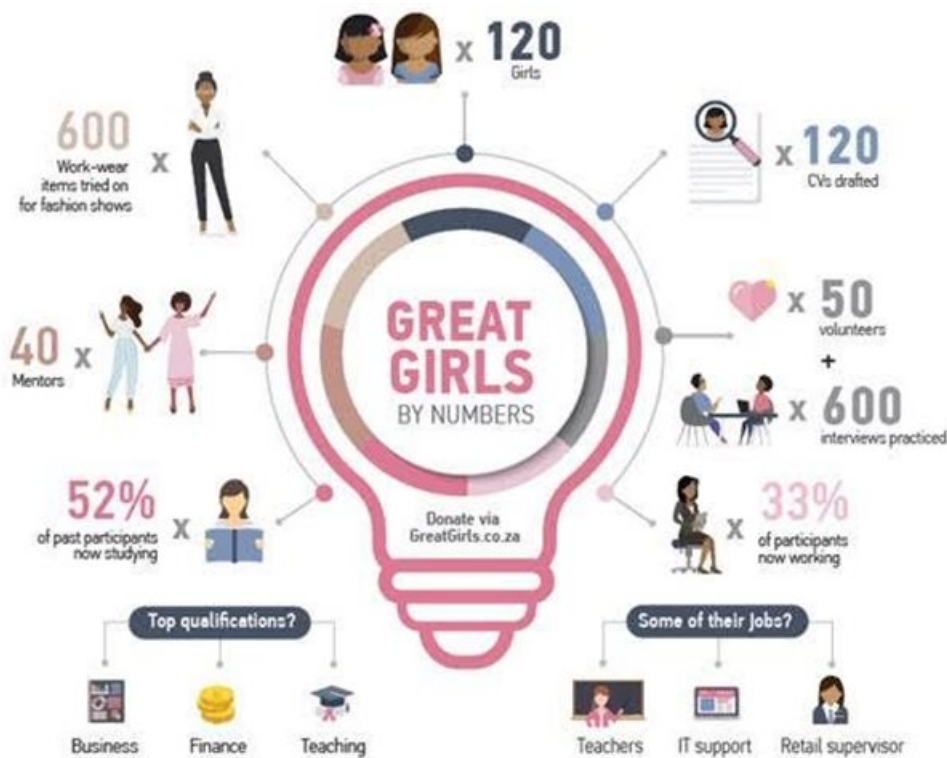
Miller founded the non-profit after helping her domestic worker's daughter find work, "One day, my domestic could not come to me so she sent her daughter instead. I got to talking to her and found she had no direction for her future. I later helped her with a CV and to find a job. I then thought that there must be so many youths in the same predicament. Often, they're the first to study in their home, with no big sister to help them apply for a bursary or university for that matter... hence, Great Girls was born."

## Technological tools

She adds that many schools simply don't equip students for job interviews and that often, disadvantaged students don't have access to the technological tools needed to create a CV. The success of the programme shows just how much of an impact access to these skills can have. Most of the Great Girls past participants are either studying or working, with two now paying-it-forward as teachers. Additionally, there's an IT support engineer, web content administrator, retail supervisor, and intern at the Department of Transport.

Many of the girls are studying business management, finance, social work, psychology, law and teaching. One has completed a tourism qualification, and another is studying to be a chef.

All these journeys began with Great Girls. The programme that operates from venues in Lavendar Hill and Belhar includes rigorous interview prep, where girls hop between volunteers who ask them questions in a staged interview process. Girls are also asked to deliver five-minute speeches about themselves to develop public speaking skills – Miller says these are invariably touching and “leave us all in tears”. There's also a fun, highly anticipated fashion show where girls get dressed in work outfits sponsored by Chic Mamas, with makeup and jewellery – all of which they get to keep for their first professional interview and hopefully, job placement. Finally, the girls are given help with applying for further studies.



An array of external speakers and volunteers are involved. The overall aim is to nourish ambition. “Every girl is capable of being great, but not every girl is given the opportunity to be as great as she truly can be – that’s where Great Girls comes in,” says Miller.

To get involved, go to [www.greatgirls.co.za](http://www.greatgirls.co.za) for more info.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>