E4 launches Stem programme to uplift underprivileged female youth

E4, a local fintech company, has launched a Girls in Stem programme to provide girls in underprivileged communities with the support they need to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Stem) post-matric.

The e4 team at the Diepdale Secondary School Computer Centre, one of the schools participating in the e4 Stem Programme. | Source: Supplied.

Officially launched last month in collaboration with Melisizwe Computer Lab Project, Girls in Stem is an after-school programme designed to peak girl learners' interests and motivate them to take up Stem subjects in Grade 10.

The programme also introduces female learners to Stem concepts in Grade 9, the crucial year before maths and science are dropped by girls as they are viewed by many as boys' subjects.

Bridging the digital gender divide

E4 says that the programme is in line with its resolve to improve the living standards of communities that were previously marginalised and upskill South Africa's youth for the digital age. It aims to bring much-needed resources to society's most vulnerable and marginalised group - young, previously disadvantaged females.

The Girls in Stem programme is currently recruiting girls from two different schools in Gauteng that Melisizwe Computer Lab Project has previously worked with. The girls are selected based on their attitude and aptitude and given technical training in science, maths, engineering, end-user computing, software development and robotics.

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Ntombi Mphokane, e4's HR and transformation executive, says that people are being left behind due to a lack of access to computers and associated skills, and many students matriculate without knowing how to use a computer or how to type out a CV and apply for employment.

"We are committed to addressing the digital gender divide and developing the next generation of young women leaders as the driving force behind digital innovation," she says.

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