Using technology as a driving force to bring more women into the sector

By Michelle Wynne
6 Aug 2021

Technology has come a long way in the last few years: the speed at which advancements that augment human capabilities are made and introduced has accelerated exponentially and will continue to do so in the coming months and years. The good news is that many of these technological innovations are being used as an enabler for doing good and creating positive change in areas like healthcare, education, and social and environmental issues.

Michelle Wynne, head of marketing Sub Sahara Africa at HMD Global | image supplied

IT has even helped forge human connections in a pandemic that has kept people apart. Students from the Forge Academy in Johannesburg – South Africa's first fully inclusive 4IR laboratory and digital learning hub – have, for instance, conceptualised and developed an augmented reality walk-through assistant known as a 'guidebot'.

It is clear that technology has the ability to bring about widespread change for the better. And women, in particular, have an important role to play as a driving force for using technology for good.

However, they are currently particularly under-represented in the technology sector. There are only 56,000 women filling 236,000 ICT roles in South Africa – 23%. Emerging technology roles, such as cloud computing, and data and AI see even lower representation, with only 14% female participation in professional cloud computing and 28% in data and AI.

Creating a wave of positive change for women in tech

Despite their lack of representation, women are making an impact in the sector. There are a growing number of examples

of women helping to create a wave of positive change, particularly in South Africa.

As a case in point: Baratang Miya founded GirlHype – Women Who Code to help empower women and girls from underserved communities in South Africa through the power of coding. This not only builds the talent pipeline and brings more girls and women into the Stem field, but it also gives them the critical skills to succeed and build their own careers, their families, and their communities.

There are other such examples of these kinds of initiatives, including Social Coding, an organisation that helps rural communities leverage technology for a better future, as well as CodeSpace Academy and GirlCode – all of which were founded and are run by women looking to create positive change and empower other women and girls.

It is no longer a matter of debate that technology has the ability to act as a force for good, helping to solve real societal challenges – but we cannot continue to fail to have critical segments of our population playing an active part in this change, particularly when we can see examples of the value they are adding as drivers of positive change. We need to play our part as the sector to ensure that we expand the talent pool of women in tech to unlock their potential.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michelle Wynne, Head of Marketing Sub Sahara Africa at HMD Global

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