

# GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

## “Coding School for 1500 Women”

### Acronyms

BTU – Business and Technology University

CS Women – Coding School for Women

GESI – Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

### Executive Summary

Gender equality and women's empowerment are important goals for both USAID and the Business and Technology University (BTU), since women's low economic participation is a significant development challenge for Georgia. Women are less involved for a variety of reasons, including those mentioned above, but this project aims to address the issue of teaching and the associated barriers.

This Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Action Plan outlines approach to addressing gender and youth issues during implementation by establishing the principles, strategy, and means by which it will overcome key constraints and address potential opportunities to promote gender and youth integration and equity throughout the value chains.

This document is structured into six parts. The first part deals with an overview of the Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Action Plan, while the second part and the third part presents introduction and the context behind. Fourth and fifth parts outlines the guiding principles and the rationale underpinning the GESI Action Plan. The sixth section presents the GESI Action Plan in table focusing on gender mainstreaming at the organizational level with outlining actions for implementation.

This GESI Action Plan is a living document that will be refined as the project activities continues to learn and adapt to the challenges of incorporating GESI priorities.

### **I. Overview**

<b>Grantee:</b>	Business and Technology University
<b>Grant Number:</b>	006-C3-002-2022-2
<b>Sector:</b>	Education
<b>Activity Title:</b>	“Coding School for 1500 Women”
<b>Duration:</b>	01.12.2022-30.11.2024
<b>Project Location:</b>	Telavi, Gori, Akhaltsikhe, Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha, Ozurgeti, Tkibuli, Ambrolauri
<b>File prepared by:</b>	Gender Expert, Ms. Nino Bitsadze in collaboration with Project Manager, Ms. Ani Chelishvili

## **Purpose of the GESI Action Plan**

The purpose of the GESI Action Plan is to provide a methodological framework to ensure that women, youth, rural communities, and ethnic minorities are fully included in implementation and benefit from project outcomes. Ensure that all key project activities adhere to USAID and BTU GESI policies.

The GESI Action Plan provides a framework to ensuring that:

- The project includes appropriate indicators to track progress toward GESI;
- Annual data is compared to planned targets, with emphasis on the extent to which historically excluded groups, participate in and benefit from projects and activities.
- Positive and negative unintended consequences affecting participants are analysed and discussed with implementing partners.
- Learning from GESI projects is regularly shared with direct beneficiaries and engaged stakeholders.

## **II. Introduction**

The “Coding School for 1500 Women” project is an unprecedented nationwide social initiative proposed by Business and Technology University and co-funded and supported by the USAID Skills-Development Program.

The project has a clear social mission and aims to deliver a meaningful impact in particular regions of Georgia including Abkhazia (Gali) which is currently most remote, vulnerable and rather disconnected from development and peace. Skills that the project beneficiaries will acquire (hard, soft) throughout the project lifetime will help them be competitive in the local and international labor markets, raising their financial and social standing, and being valued equally with men. The project idea and the replication of the courses planned by the university are industry-led and serves the 4 Sustainable Development Goals (4- Quality Education, 5 - Gender Equality, 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth, 17 - Partnerships to achieve the Goal) of the UN, which are designed to be a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

The project coordinator and project partners join the efforts around three main pillars: Educate, Empower and Engage.

The Grant objectives include:

- Offering the training opportunities to 1500 women in the selected regions/cities of the country;
- Offering the better/new employment opportunities to the graduates;
- Providing beneficiaries with mandatory Tech English (through online automated platform), tech (Frontend, Backend, UI/UX, Graphic Design, Software Testing, Digital Marketing) and soft skills Bootcamp in Leadership, Business Communication, Teamwork, Critical Thinking along with the employment mentorship in careers, freelancing;
- Providing basic computer/internet access in the regions for those women interested in developing their basic tech skills - opening CS Women Spaces in selected cities/schools;
- Offering women in the regions access to successful Georgian women in the same fields, sharing their success stories;

- Creating the regional database/platform for the beneficiaries to connect with each other, share ideas and form SMEs, startups to promote economic and women-led startup ecosystem development;
- Developing the sustainability strategy and adding the board of regional members and tech ambassadors on the platform from all the regions to transfer their knowledge to young generation and support their integration into the platform with educational resources, also to connect the beneficiaries with the local/international employers;
- Providing additional entrepreneurship training for the interested candidates to further develop their ideas and raise funding;
- Raising awareness of women tech-makers and entrepreneurs in the regions for their further empowerment.

### III. **Context Overview**

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. The global pandemic has accelerated digital transformations and further increased the already growing demand for ICT specialists. While the average growth forecast for all occupations worldwide is 3%, the need for ICT professionals is expected to grow by 8%<sup>1</sup>, thus widening the gap between the supply and demand of professionals in the sector.

Developing the ICT service sector is one of Georgia's strategic priorities. The sector generates some of the highest paid jobs. However, companies continue to suffer from an expanding shortage of professionals, which affects the firms' productivity and competitiveness. This occurs due to a variety of factors.

Women's limited participation in economic activities is significant development challenge for Georgia. Georgia ranks 49 out of 156 countries in The Global Gender Gap Index 2021. Moreover, Georgia fell in the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex ranking from 61st place in 2020 to 64th in 2021. Women's economic inactivity rate is almost twice as high as men's. Only 51% of women are reportedly employed in Georgia compared with 64% of men. The gender pay gap accounts for 24.8% (adjusted for the lower number of hours that women work on average) and is only just over half what men earn when their lower employment participation rate is also factored in. Gender stereotypes have dominated women's career choices and affected their engagement in STEM fields. The lack of gender-responsive services and programs hinders women from acquiring new skills, developing businesses, and earning a sustainable income. As women represent half of Georgia's potential labor force, targeted interventions are required to ensure women's economic potential is fully utilized. Women's involvement is especially problematic in rural areas and among ethnic minorities. This is due to factors such as a lack of regional technoparks (similar institutions), a lack of Internet access, and transportation issues, in the case of minorities, language barriers, are one of the key barriers among others.

Women are less involved for a variety of reasons, including those mentioned above, but this project aims to address the issue of teaching and the associated barriers. However, the country's training system, which primarily affects the development of technical skills, is underdeveloped. As a result,

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- <sup>1</sup> EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY; "WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN THE ICT SECTOR"

the goal of this project is to solve both the teaching problem and to achieve gender balance in the ICT sector.

The Coding School for 1500 Women project aims to deliver a meaningful impact on the ICT sector and women from six regions of Georgia, including areas along the Administrative Boundary Lines (ABL) and those highly populated by ethnic minority groups. Skills training programs proposed by the applicant for replication are driven by the growing need for a qualified workforce in the ICT sector. Skills that rural women and girls will acquire throughout the grant will help them be competitive in the local and international labor markets and raise their standard of living. In addition, the grant activity seeks to contribute to the achievement of four of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals: 4 - Quality Education, 5 - Gender Equality, 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth, and 17 - Partnerships to Achieve the Goal.

BTU's initiative is based on a long-standing collaborative effort between the University and its industry partners, with the goal of solving sector demand through the establishment of industry-led skills development programs involving over twenty sector lead companies and educational institutions (TBC Bank, Liberty Bank, HT Solutions, EPAM Systems, Quantori Georgia, Travel Guide, Cryptx Group, Adjara Group, B2C.ge, Exadel Georgia, Sweeft, Exactpro Systems Georgia, and Lineate, as well as eight public high schools), and strengthening the result-oriented partnerships nationwide.

BTU will also partner with eight public high schools from targeted regions to ensure increased access to high-quality training programs for rural women with limited resources related to computers and high-speed internet. The role of the schools mentioned above will be to allocate a room for the Coding School (CS) Women Spaces and support the applicant during the outreach of potential trainees at the local level.

The proposed target for rural women (1,500 total) is driven by the high demand for the suggested skill development programs, as identified during the 500 Women in Tech initiative implemented jointly by BTU and UN Women. Around 4,000 women and girls expressed their willingness and desire to engage in the training initiatives, and nearly 2,300 passed the placement test, but only 700 have been provided with training opportunities, thus leaving over 1,500 women who are waiting to learn and subsequently find relevant employment. BTU possesses an active database that will help in achieving the set targets

#### **IV. Strategic Approach and Principles of the Project**

The target audience/direct beneficiaries of the "Coding School for 1500 Women" are women from the specific regions/municipalities of Georgia with the focus on:

- those where minorities are represented (Such as: Samtskhe-Javakheti, Abkhazia)
- those living near the breakaway regions (Locations such as: Samegrelo, Racha-Lechkhumi, Abkhazia, Shida Kartli)
- those with the lowest employability rate (Such as: Guria, Racha-Lechkhumi, Shida Kartli, Imereti, Kakheti)

Target Municipalities: Telavi, Gori (covering Tserovani Settlement), Akhaltsikhe, Zugdidi (covering Gali), Tsalenjikha, Tkibuli, Ambrolauri (covering Oni), Ozurgeti.

Target Age Group of the project is:16-40 (Accent on youth:16-29)

One of the key arguments about the “Coding School for 1500 Women” is based on the GeoStat data from 2020. According to the graph below, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti are the most lagging regions in terms of employment rate followed by Kvemo Kartli and Imereti.

Additionally, Tserovani is the refugee settlement in Georgia where mixed families are located including ethnic minorities with the urgent need for basic tech and language skills development and employment opportunities to support the integration of the community into the country’s united innovation ecosystem. The project also aims to deliver a meaningful impact in one particular area of Georgia - which is currently most remote, vulnerable and rather disconnected from development and peace. Abkhazia is currently outside the control of Georgia's central government. While different international organizations lead education support initiatives, the problem of access to quality education, especially focused on digital literacy, remains unsolved. While over 90% of jobs worldwide have a digital component, women and girls in Abkhazia have limited access to digital technologies and related training. Without increased digital adoption and use, girls will have fewer employment opportunities and will face additional barriers to workforce participation.

The project's indirect beneficiaries are the beneficiaries' families, as well as other non-participant women and girls who will be reached out through project awareness and career orientation campaigns.

Mixed methodology - Transparency, a special emphasis on stakeholder engagement, quality assurance based on feedback, reflection in further actions and communication will be used as a bridge between the big idea of the project and the reality of how the coordinator will make it happen.

Communication and outreach activities/campaigns are integral part of the project and are included in the milestones. On-site Events (Launch, Closing, Employment Forums), dedicated outreach/career orientation meetings in the targeted regions, social media campaigns (promo video, posts, articles, opinion makers), Email communication, web-based campaigns (articles, posts), TV (interviews) will be used to promote grant activities, reach out to potential audience and enhance the collaboration with industry partners.

## **V. GESI Action Plan Guiding Principals**

The “Coding School for 1500 Women” Project implementation is a multi-dimensional process aimed to create conditions that allow for full access by and active participation of women (particular focus on youth too) from the targeted regions, regardless of ethnicity, religion, language, or social status. Targeted information dissemination and recruitment processes, effective industry-led training programs, employment support services, career guidance, and employer engagement will create a sustainable pathway between skills training and high-value employment opportunities, empowering women, and girls to reduce unemployment and become contributors to economic growth across the country.

The training programs identified for replication within the grant project – Frontend, Backend, UI/UX, Graphic Design, Software Testing, Digital Marketing – are aligned with private sector requirements for a qualified workforce. Furthermore, each training program will add value to rural participants' long-term career paths. In addition, the proposed skills development programs have

the potential to significantly contribute to the sector's long-term growth and generate positive productivity spillovers into other industries.

Activities is guided by the following key principles in developing the GESI Action Plan:

- **Gender equity:** The activities aim to increase the number of women and young girls working in the ICT sector. Activities will involve collaborating with MSME cohorts to identify business opportunities and comprehend the advantages of targeting services to women and youth.
- **Prioritize social inclusion:** Ensuring the participation of marginalized/vulnerable groups irrespective of location, ethnicity, or religion. In this case, the Extension Activity will ensure that intervention benefits flow to diverse, socially excluded groups of women/youth.
- **Tailored outreach for youth empowerment:** Activities of work plan will promote partnerships between public, private, and civil society stakeholders to promote youth engagement to develop their business skills and capacities.

## VI. Action Plan

Gender and Social Inclusion Plan						
Project Milestone and Activity	GSI Activity (brief description)	GSI Sub-deliverable (specific result)	Indicators of Achievement	Responsible Person	Timeline	Resources (financial, technical & human resources)
Milestone 2 Activity 1: training programs (curricula, teaching methods, outcomes, learning materials, assessment etc.) and quality assurance documents on six (+1 Tech English) training programs are updated/finalized. The project includes appropriate indicators to track progress toward GESI;	Updated/finalized training program(s) promote diversity and are free from gender stereotypes both in terms of content and imagery. Gender sensitive program in place.	Updated/finalized training programs and respective learning materials are designed to provide equal educational opportunities for the target groups	6 training program descriptions (+Tech English)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Manager</li> <li>Trainers</li> </ul>	February, 2023	Grant Financing/Project Manager  Applicant's In-kind Contribution/ Trainers
Milestone 2 Activity 2: full cycle of recruitment and enrolment of 1500 women for three cohorts are finalized. Learning from GESI projects is regularly shared with direct beneficiaries and engaged stakeholders.	The recruitment process promotes diversity and is free from gender stereotypes	The recruitment process is designed to provide equal educational opportunities for the target groups	List of 1500 Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Manager</li> <li>Project Assistant</li> <li>Assistant in Recruitment Process</li> </ul>	February, 2023	Grant Financing/Project Manager, Project Assistant, Assistant in Recruitment Process
Milestone 3 Activity 1: training facilities (CS women space) in eight locations (Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha, Tkibuli,	The set-up process promotes diversity and is free from gender stereotypes as well as	The set-up process is designed to provide equal educational opportunities for the target groups	8 Schools in target municipalities are prepared and equipped with Computer Tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Manager</li> <li>Project Assistant</li> </ul>	March-April, 2023	Grant Financing/Project Manager, Project Assistant, Equipment

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<p>Ambrolauri, Ozurgeti, Akhaltsikhe, Gori, Telavi) are set up. Positive and negative unintended consequences affecting participants are analysed and discussed with implementing partners. Learning from GESI projects is regularly shared with direct beneficiaries and engaged stakeholders.</p>	<p>promotes women’s involvement in tech</p>		<p>and Chairs, Computers and Monitors</p>			<p>Applicant's In-kind Contribution/ Non-structural cosmetic works - CS Spaces</p>
<p>Milestone 5 Activity 1: training programs (curricula, teaching methods, outcomes, learning materials, etc.) and quality assurance documents on six (+1 Tech English) training programs are updated/finalized. Annual data is compared to planned targets, with emphasis on the extent to which members of historically excluded groups, participate in</p>	<p>Updated/finalized training program(s) promote diversity and are free from gender stereotypes both in terms of content and imagery</p>	<p>Updated/finalized training programs and respective learning materials are designed to provide equal educational opportunities for the target groups</p>	<p>6 training program descriptions (+Tech English)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Manager</li> <li>• Trainers</li> </ul>	<p>October, 2023</p>	<p>Grant Financing/Project Manager</p> <p>Applicant's In-kind Contribution/ Trainers</p>



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Project Milestone and Activity	GSI Activity (brief description)	GSI Sub-deliverable (specific result)	Indicators of Achievement	Responsible Person	Timeline	Resources (financial, technical & human resources)
and benefit from projects and activities.						
Milestone 6 Activity 5: training programs (curricula, teaching methods, outcomes, learning materials, etc.) and quality assurance documents on six (+1 Tech English) training programs are updated/finalized	Updated/finalized training program(s) promote diversity and are free from gender stereotypes both in terms of content and imagery	Updated/finalized training programs and respective learning materials are designed to provide equal educational opportunities for the target groups	6 training program descriptions (+Tech English)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Manager</li> <li>• Trainers</li> </ul>	March, 2024	Grant Financing/Project Manager  Applicant's In-kind Contribution/ Trainers