



International Girls in ICT Day 2024 Celebration in NYC

Concept Note

2:00 – 5:00 P.M. EST, Thursday, April 25, 2024

Columbia University, School of Professional Studies [Career Design Lab](#)

729 7th Avenue, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10019

International Girls in ICT Day is celebrated every year around the world on the fourth Thursday of April and will be observed on April 25th this year. The theme for this year's Girls in ICT day celebrations is "Leadership", aiming to underscore the critical need for strong female role models in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers.

Despite women now filling 40% of high-skill occupations globally, their participation in Information and communication technology (ICT)-related fields continues to be low. Women are nearly absent from software development, engineering, technology research, academia, as well as at the highest levels of policy-making. They also tend to leave science and technology jobs at higher rates than men. While a leadership gender gap exists in every industry, the largest gaps are found in the STEM fields. Women in ICT often find themselves in junior or support roles rather than in managerial roles, with little opportunity for advancement. They are also less likely to hold an executive position, become ICT entrepreneurs, or be represented among science and

technology policymakers. To thrive in STEM, girls and young women must be exposed to women in leadership positions, fostering inspiration and breaking down barriers that hinder their progress. The Girls in ICT Day 2024 theme aims to address these challenges, encouraging empowerment and leadership development for a more equitable future in STEM.

This year, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) will be in partnership with the School of Professional Studies, Columbia University, United Nations International Computing Center (UNICC) and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) for a very special in-person event to celebrate International Girls in ICT Day 2024 on Thursday, April 25th, bringing together women and girls in science, technology and innovation (STI) at Career Design Lab, Columbia University, School of Professional Studies.

The event will convene girls and students with women mentors from the private sector, the United Nations, NGOs, and academia to meet and be inspired by each other, participate in fun ice-breaker activities, discuss the themes of International Girls in ICT Day, and engage in science/technology/innovation-related hands-on activities. The event will feature a design thinking session facilitated by Ms. Lee Kim and Dr. Joann Halpern.

Past events

This event is the latest in a series of events to mark international days relevant to girls and technology in New York City. For the past few years, the UN has teamed up with the NYC Mayor's Office for International Affairs to host a celebration with local girls (middle schoolers in Grades 7 and 8 from across NYC's boroughs), young women in college or graduate school, and women in tech from the private and public sectors. Our past events include:

- International Girls in ICT Day 2018, New York City (see [news item](#)) on 25 April - Microsoft Technology Center, Times Square, New York
- International Girls in ICT Day 2019, New York City (see [news item](#)) on 25 April - Tata Innovation Building, Cornell Tech, Roosevelt Island, New York
- International Women and Girls in Science Day 2020, New York City on 14 February – Rise New York Innovation Hub
- International Girls in ICT Day 2022, New York City (see [news item](#)) on 27 April - New York University, Tandon School of Engineering, Brooklyn, New York
- International Day of Girl 2022, New York City (see [news item](#)) on 13 October - Infosys Foundation USA
- International Day of Girl 2023, New York City (see news item) on 27 April - Columbia University, School of Professional Studies Career Design Lab



(2023 Event at Columbia SPS CDL. Photos: UNICC/Denian)

At these events, girls from New York City public schools participating in the NYC Junior Ambassadors initiative of the NYC Mayor's Office and women in science, technology and/or innovation from ITU, UNICC, UNDP, UN Global Pulse, UNICEF, UN Women, WIPO, Barclays, Build n Blaze, Microsoft, Mozilla, Facebook, Tata, Telstra, Break Through Tech, Brooklyn College, Verizon, Morgan Stanley, Pro Mujer, GSMA, Black Girls Code, KPMG, Amazon, Infosys Foundation USA and many more have participated.

About Columbia University, Career Design Lab

Career Design Lab: As one of the seventeen prestigious schools affiliated with Columbia University, the School of Professional Studies is expanding the reach and impact of an Ivy League education so more students can take their education and careers to the next level. The Career Design Lab at Columbia University, the School of Professional Studies, provides innovative career development programs and experiential opportunities integrating the "Design Thinking" concept and process.

Youth-in-STEM: Launched by Columbia University's School of Professional Studies, with support from corporate partners and community organisations, the Columbia Youth in STEM initiative addresses the persistent gender and diversification gap across science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. It prepares students from underrepresented populations to enter college and the workplace with increased confidence and capabilities. For questions concerning admissions requirements, please contact youthinstem@columbia.edu.

Columbia HBCU Fellowship: The mission of the Columbia HBCU Fellowship Program is to prepare talented, high-performing HBCU graduates to lead, innovate, drive community impact, and advance their professional industries through program engagement, mentorship, and career development opportunities. Current seniors or recent graduates from HBCU undergraduate institutions can apply for the fellowship. Visit [the website](#) for your program of choice and carefully read the Application Requirements for the program for those interested.

UN SDGs Global Challenge Think-a-Thon: As an extension of UNICC's commitment to fostering partnerships with academic institutions, UNICC has partnered with the [Columbia University School](#)

of Professional Studies (SPS) for the [Think-a-Thon challenge](#). This partnership builds upon the inaugural 2021 Think-a-Thon challenge bringing students, alumni and teammates from across the world for collaboration and innovation.

About the SDGs and IATT



The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. There are 17 interconnected goals and ICT has a vital role to play in achieving each of them. This event supports SDG 5 (gender parity), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and SDG 17 (Partnerships and the means of implementation). The [UN interagency task team on STI for the SDGs \(IATT\)](#) is mandated to “promote coordination, coherence, and cooperation within the UN System on STI related matters, enhancing synergy and efficiency, in particular to enhance capacity-building initiatives”. The IATT has ten work streams covering different approaches on STI for the SDGs. This event supports workstream five: Gender and STI co-led by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

This event is also in support of the [World Intellectual Property Day 2024](#) (April 26). This year World IP Day focuses on IP and the SDGs under the theme “building our common future with innovation and creativity”.

Event Facilitators

- **Ms. Diane Spizzirro (Moderator)**
- **Ms. Lee Kim**, Co-Founder/Community Designer, Identity Lab; Co-Founder/Community Builder, Design Dream Lab
- **Dr. Joann Halpern**, Director, Hasso Plattner Institute, New York

CDL Contact:

- Diane Spizzirro (ds3309@columbia.edu)

UN Contact:

- Rui Wan (rui.wan@itu.int)
- Jean Pierre Mora Casasola (mora@unicc.org)
- Denian Ouyang (ouyang@unicc.org)

2024 Programme

2:00 - 2:15 pm Arrival

Students and women-in-tech are seated in groups of six – two middle schoolers, two college students and two women-in-tech. As they arrive and sit at the tables they have been allocated to, they meet and greet each other.

2:15 - 2:30 pm Welcome and opening

The event opens. A brief welcome and opening remarks by the venue host, CDL then [Youth-in-STEM](#) program, [Columbia HBCU Fellowship](#) and collectively by the organizers on the goals of International Girls in ICT Day. A [video](#), of UNICC Think-A-Thon will be played on the screen with a brief explanation of application of Design Thinking process and the next chapter of the Think-a-Thon > the Greater Good Challenge.

2:30 - 3:00 pm Introductions and group discussion

The event facilitators provide an explanation of the first activity. The women and girls in their groups introduce themselves, share why tech is important to them/what they like about it, why it is important to the world, and note down ideas for how more women and girls could be attracted to this rapidly growing sector. They will write down these answers on posters that will be stuck up on the wall around the room at the end of the activity by the event organisers.

3:00 - 3:15 pm Explanation of design thinking and introduction of the second activity

A fun, hands-on design thinking activity will be introduced by the facilitator.

3:15 - 4:00 pm Design thinking activity

The groups will use a variety of craft materials to make a model that gets the group moving, interacting, collaborating and having fun.

4:00 - 4:20 pm Share back with the full group

Each group will do a brief report back on what their group made.

4:20 – 5:00 pm Mixing activity and group photo

There will be a fun activity/game to get more of the girls and women interacting and meeting each other. The event concludes with a group photo.

5:00 pm Event end