

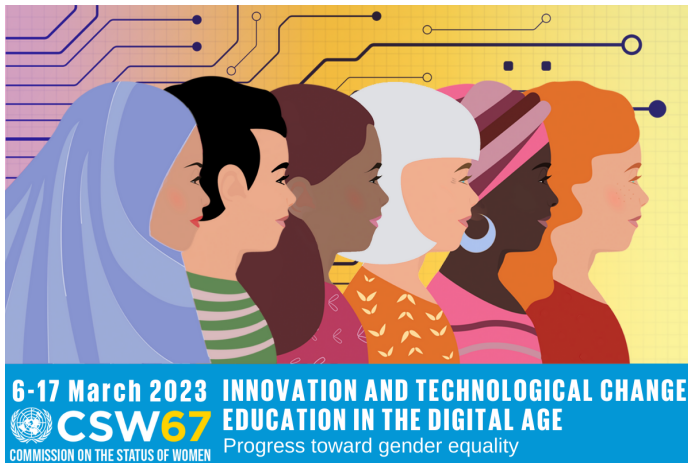


AHAM EDUCATION

Art of Happiness and Mindfulness
Academy of the Heart and Mind

Leveraging Technological Innovation for Transformative Gender Equality through Building Socio-Emotional Well-being of Women and Girls and Mitigating the Mental Health Crisis of the 21st century

**A Statement of AHAM Education, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, to the 67th Commission on the Status of Women
January 27, 2023**



On behalf of AHAM Education Inc, NGO with consultative status to UN ECOSOC, and our delegation representing NGOs, hospitals, schools and businesses in the United States, Honduras and Trinidad and Tobago, we are pleased to submit this statement in preparation for the sixty-seven (67th) session

of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) on the priority theme ***“Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”***.

As mentioned in the Common Africa Position Adopted by Ministers Responsible for Gender and Women’s Affairs and/or their Representatives at the virtual consultative meeting on December 1, 2022, we reiterate the existence and need to track the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to technological innovation and access to and use of the digital economy, namely SDGs 1 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 16. Further, in relation to research on the status of the health of women and girls and technology and social media use, we highlight the following:



- While technology and social media are powerful tools for female empowerment, they can negatively impact female physical, mental, and social emotional health particularly for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) and LGBTQI+ women and girls – such as anxiety or depression, isolation, cyberbullying, brain health issues from screen overexposure, and body-image issues.
- Mental illness can affect all children and youth, yet research shows girls are at greater risk for depression, anxiety, suicidal thinking/behavior and self-injury, and eating disorders than boys. Heavy social media use and the COVID-19 pandemic have increased the risk of mental illness among this generation of girls - high engagement with Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram all led to increased feelings of depression, anxiety, poor body image, and loneliness in teenage girls, while high levels of smart phone and social media use are associated with increase in mental distress, self-injury, and suicidal behavior among adolescents.

In light of the growing mental health crisis mentioned above, we must ensure that technological progress does not impede or exacerbate our mental, physical and social and emotional well-being but rather enhances it as a priority. Gender progress must include gender well-being. Our solutions must leverage technological innovation to prioritize, promote and measure sustainable holistic female well-being and empowerment as an integrative component of sustainable development. As such, we call for the following gender-transformative solutions:

1. Co-create with like minded partners a composite index of gender-transformative well-being that incorporates evidence-based, culturally-responsive measures of physical, social, mental, emotional factors that promote mindful awareness, post-traumatic growth, healing, self-efficacy and positive outlook, and that also tracks technology and social media engagement factors.



2. Place women and girls at the center of decision making, design and application of technological innovation in the medical field so that solutions advance women and girls educational and professional development and take into account their health needs and sexual and reproductive rights, for a more gender-informed and gender-responsive medical system.
3. Apply gender-informed and gender-responsive features to apps and games that create safe spaces to facilitate learning of English, STEAM, and daily mindfulness-based and mind-body practices and nature-based activities, with greater ease and proficiency to empower women and girls to be more competitive in the global marketplace, reach for greater professional achievement and higher earnings, while sustaining good physical health, socio-emotional well-being and connection to nature and the outdoors.
4. Provide UN-endorsed multi-stakeholder partnership training programs and safe-space business incubators for BIPOC women and budding female entrepreneurs, scientists, artists, coaches, activists and content creators in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean to increase their income through the production and sale of digital educational products and safe web-based networks that promote and track:
 - English language and bilingual literacy,
 - Women and girls physical, reproductive, mental, social and spiritual health and resilience
 - Gender-transformative financial literacy, investment and economic agency,
 - Gender-responsive climate justice action and nature-based outdoor engagement
 - Educational programs for women and girls on digital gender violence to ensure women are not pressured to leave positions of leadership in journalism, civil society, and government.
 - Transnational exchange of ideas, female stories and narratives that shift patriarchal paradigms and cultural traditions which perpetuate cycles of poverty, violence and



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oppression against women, and work toward female empowerment in technological innovation, reframed national identities, and more positive and productive relationships with men and boys.

- Data collection, mapping and dissemination of gender-informed and gender-responsive SDG goals, programmatic progress, and outcomes.

We welcome support for this statement by fellow NGO representatives and multi stakeholders aligned with our proposed solutions.

Contributing partners:

Mind Body Resiliency Coalition of Broward members, Florida, USA

Juneteenth for Joy, Florida, USA

Mujeres Latinas Impulsando Mujeres Latinas of Broward County, Florida, USA

Conscious Feminine Inc., Florida, USA

CBC Codebreaker, Honduras

International Center for Therapeutic Arts (ICTA), Trinidad and Tobago