



The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)

supports

International Girls in ICT Day – Access and Safety

28 April 2022

According to the [latest research](#), the proportion of women using the Internet globally amounts to 48%, compared to 55% of men. In relative terms, this means that the global Internet use gender gap stands at 12.5%.

For girls and young women to thrive in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers, they need safe and reliable access to the Internet and digital tools. If women are unable to access the Internet and feel safe online, they are consequently unable to develop the necessary digital skills and engage in digital spaces. This in turn diminishes their opportunities to pursue careers in STEM related fields.

Unfortunately, digital spaces also open up a whole world of abuse, false information, and misogyny. Females experience cyber-bullying and cyber-harassment through being physically threatened, sexually harassed, body-shamed and racially abused. This need to change.

ASSAf supports the lowering of barriers to access and improving safety online for girls and young women, also through its initiatives to promote gender equality and women empowerment.

ASSAf would like to call on all publics to help create safe and accessible digital spaces for women (incl. girls) through the commemoration of **Girls in ICT Day** on **28 April 2022**.

Read more at:

<https://www.itu.int/women-and-girls/girls-in-ict/international-girls-in-ict-day-2022/>

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/10/it-s-time-to-take-girls-digital-safety-and-literacy-seriously/>



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