

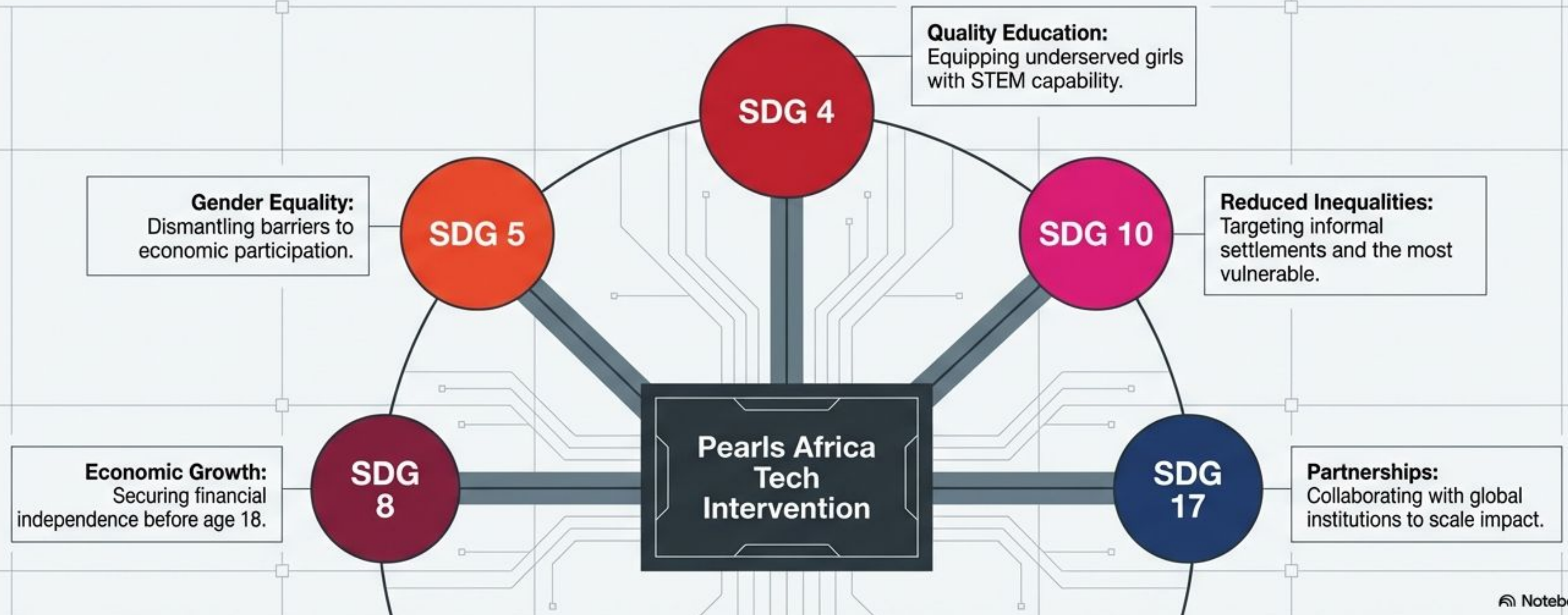
Systemic Economic Transformation Through Girls in Technology

Operationalizing the UN Sustainable Development Goals via the Pearls Africa Youth Foundation.

| Founded by Abisoye Ajayi-Akinfolarin | Established 2012

The Impact Thesis: Technology as a Catalyst for Five Core SDGs

Pearls Africa Youth Foundation transforms grassroots digital literacy into macroeconomic outcomes, establishing a scalable blueprint for intergenerational wealth and gender parity across Africa.



The Dual Crisis of Isolation and Underrepresentation

The Community Context

400,000

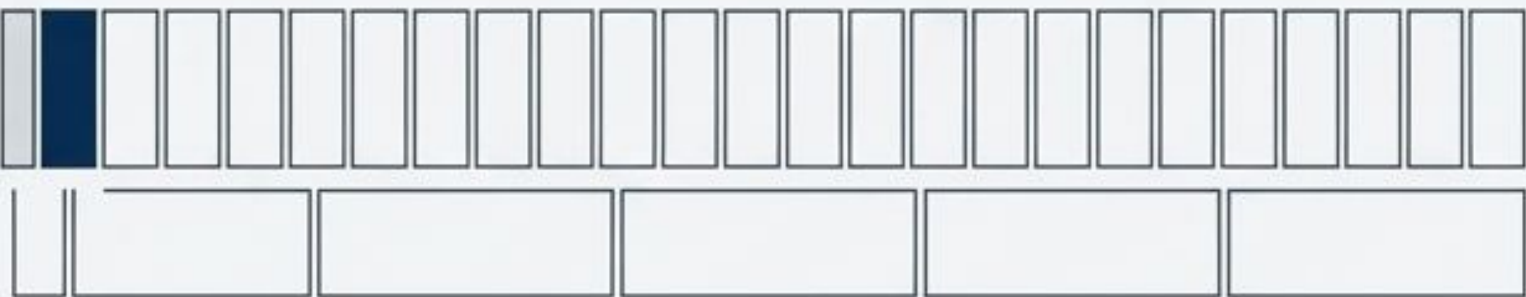


The Community Context

Makoko, Lagos—one of the world's largest informal waterside settlements. A landscape where vulnerable girls are trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty without access to food, water, electricity, or structured education.

The Systemic Deficit

<8%



The Systemic Deficit

A stark 2013 reality where fewer than 8% of Nigerian women held professional, managerial, or technology roles.

When I went to Makoko for the first time, I was surprised to see the living conditions of human beings. Most girls are trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty. Many of them are not thinking education, a plan for the future.
— Abisoye Ajayi-Akinfolarin



The Architect: Abisoye Ajayi-Akinfolarin

Losing her mother at age 4 and navigating a difficult childhood, she left a successful IT consulting career to permanently alter the trajectory for women in Nigeria's technology sector.



Academic Rigor

Mid-Career Master of Public Administration (MPA), Harvard Kennedy School (Edward S. Mason Fellow, 2021).



Global Validation

2018 CNN Hero (Top 10), 2018 BBC 100 Women, 2017 Woman of the Year in Technology.



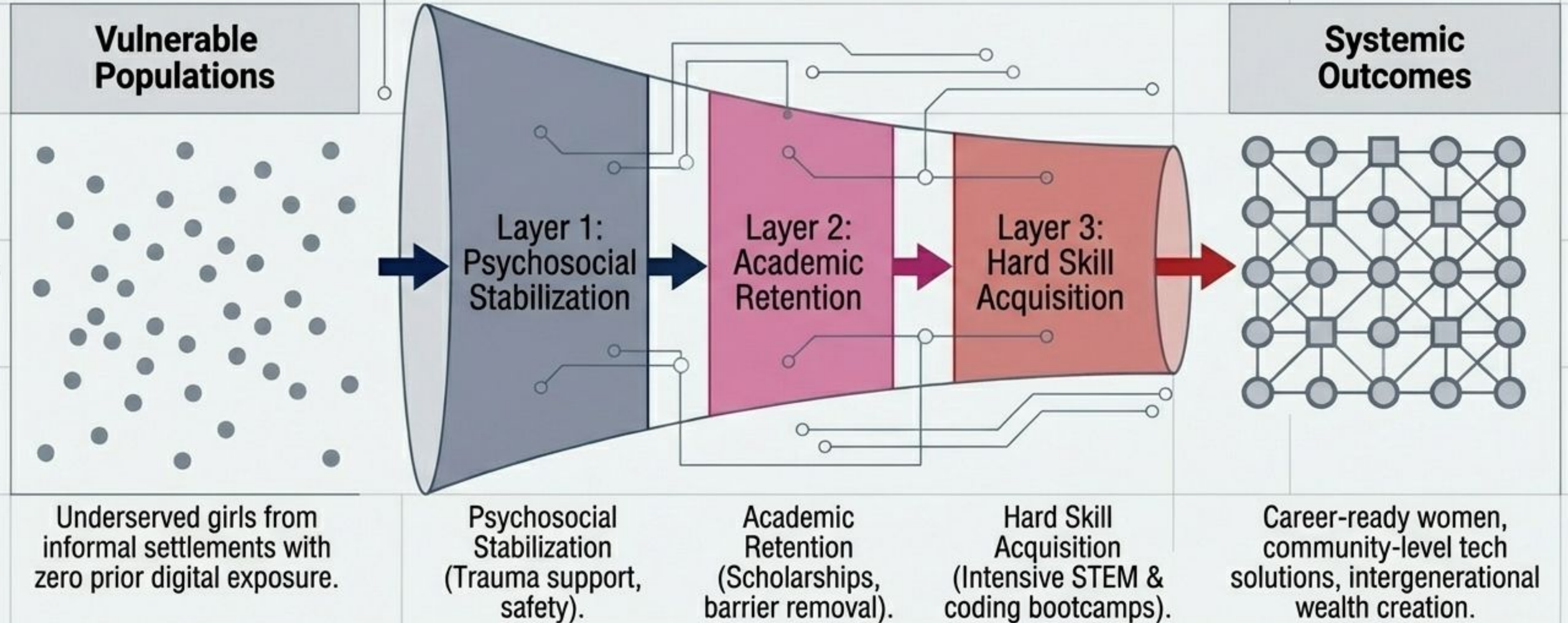
Systems Leadership

Ashoka Fellow (2022), Adrian Cheng Fellow, U.S. IVLP Alumna.

Engineering a New Trajectory for Highly Vulnerable Youth

The Paradigm Shift Matrix		The Default Trajectory	The Pearls Africa Trajectory
Inter	Economic Horizon	Poverty-to-dropout pipeline.	Target of absolute economic independence before age 18.
Inter	Sector Participation	Exclusion from the digital economy (<8% baseline).	Transition from digital illiteracy to active creators (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Python).
Inter	Family Impact	Intergenerational perpetuation of informal settlement poverty.	Whole-family resilience through parallel maternal micro-enterprises.
Inter	Geographic Scope	Geographically trapped in isolated communities.	Integration into a Pan-African network spanning 16 countries .

Intercepting the Vicious Cycle of Poverty



The Pearls Africa Ecosystem: A Three-Pillar Architecture

Pillar 1: Digital Capabilities

(Targeted STEM & coding mastery)

GirlsCoding

GirlsInSTEM

Lady Labs

Pillar 2: Holistic Resilience

(Mental health, retention, and guidance)

Safe Space

EducateHer

GC Mentors

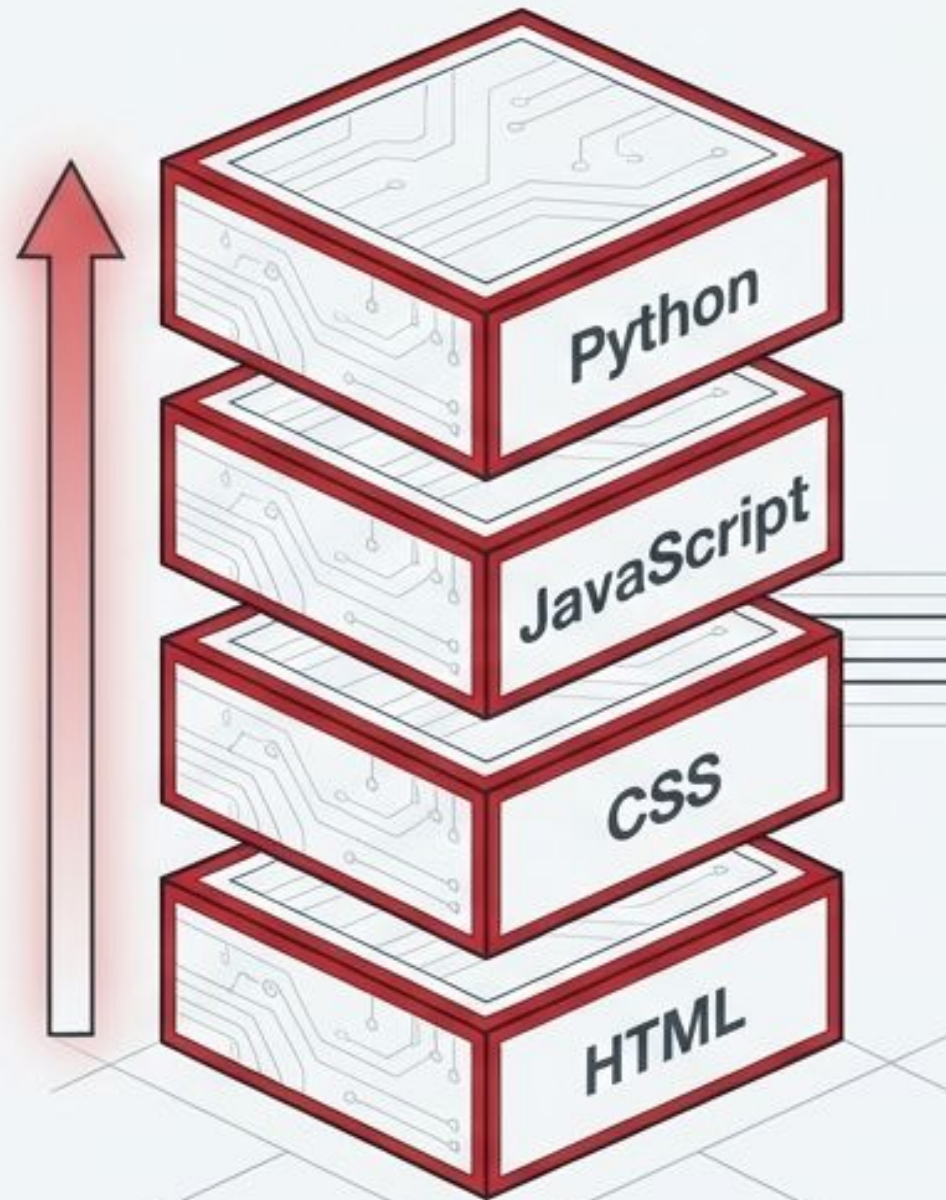
Pillar 3: Economic Ecosystem

(Vocational independence and family wealth)

Empowered
Hands

Mamamoni
Partnership

Pillar I: Forging Unprecedented Digital Capabilities



Core Curriculum Stack

GirlsCoding (Flagship)

Transforms girls who have never touched a computer into software creators building apps and websites for their local communities.

GirlsInSTEM

Bridges the digital divide in public education by aligning device access and training with national education standards.

Lady Labs

Delivers targeted basic IT and digital inclusion for older girls and out-of-school young women.

Pillar II: Engineering Holistic Resilience and Retention

Safe Space

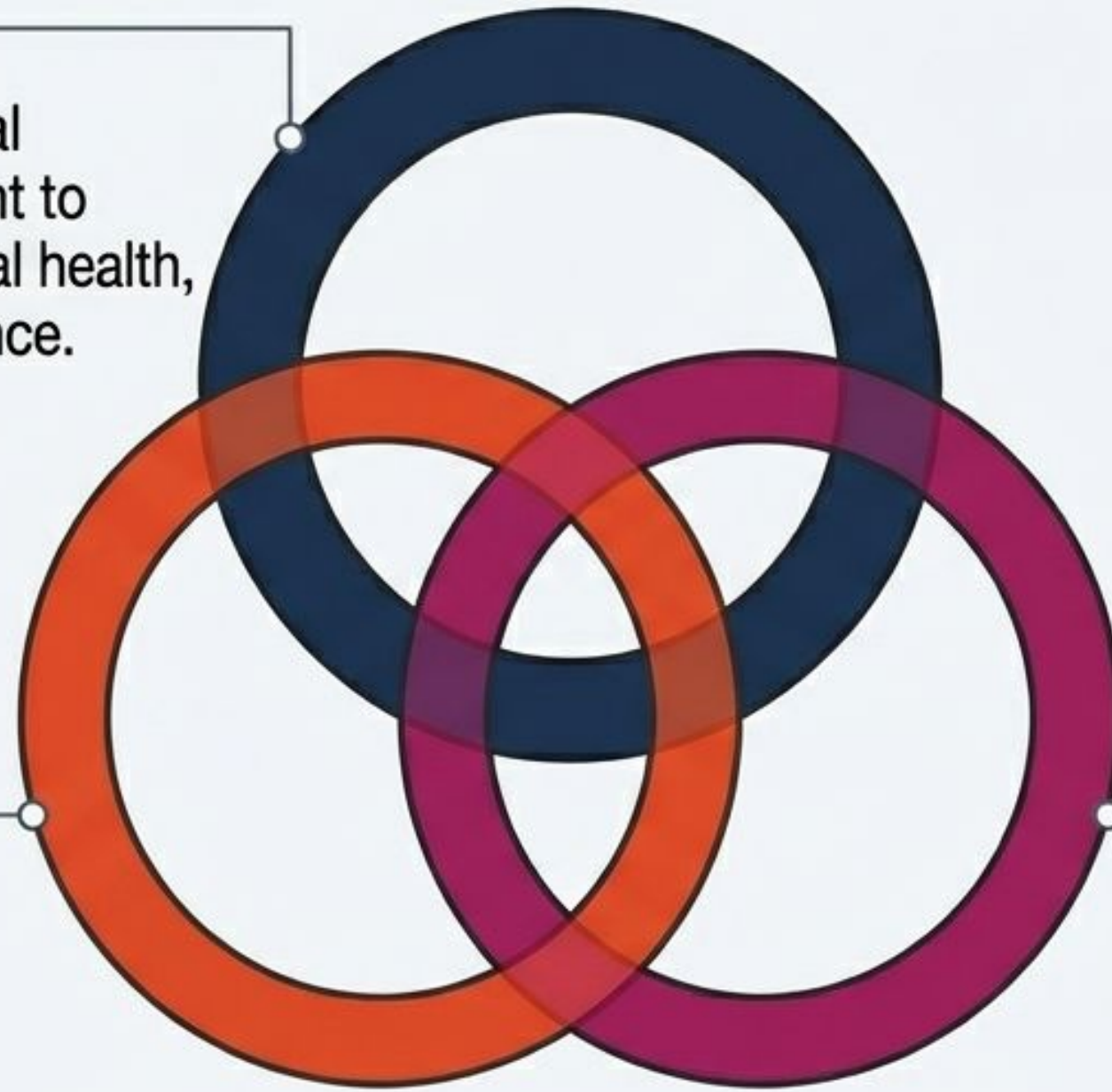
Providing critical psychosocial wellness. A trusted environment to address trauma, navigate sexual health, and build foundational confidence.

EducateHer

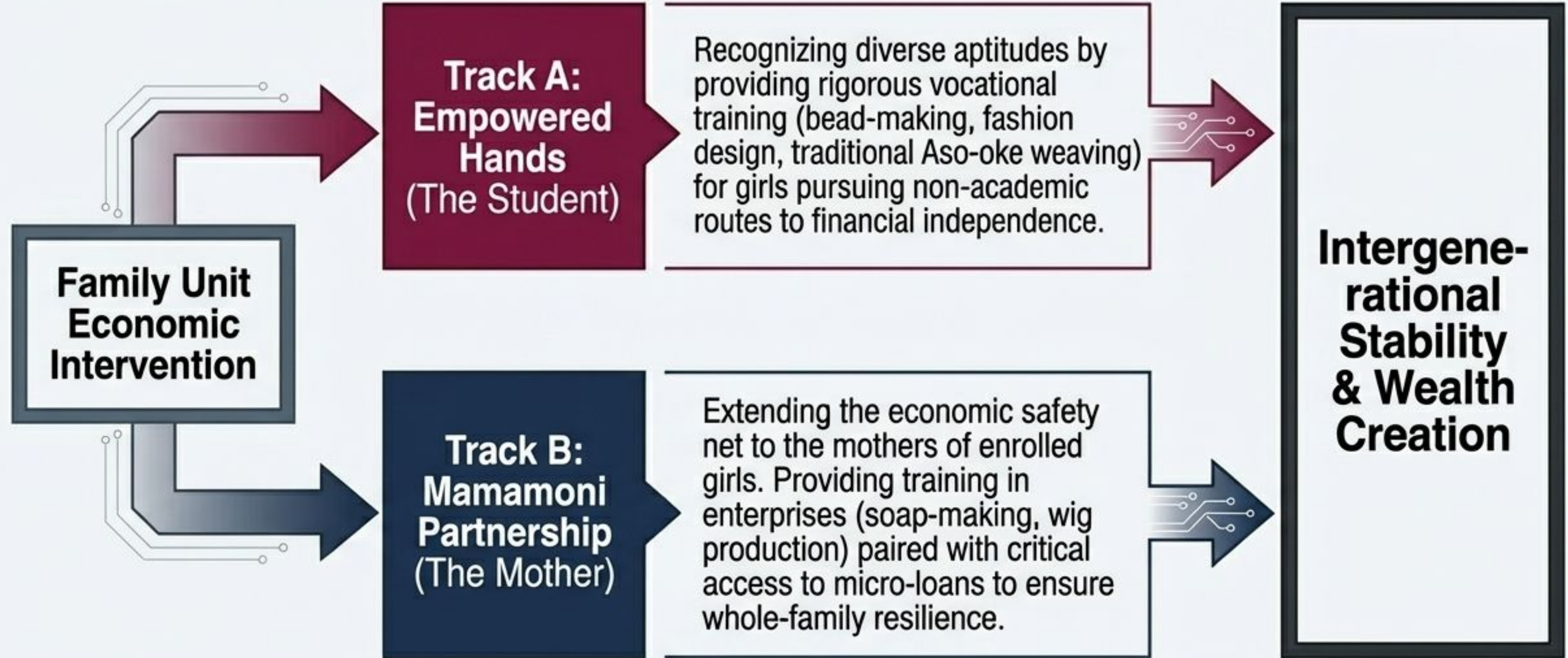
Severing the poverty-to-dropout pipeline by identifying and funding academically promising girls from underserved backgrounds.

GC Mentors

Connecting vulnerable youth with established women professionals in STEM and business for career guidance and role modelling.



Pillar III: Cultivating a Total Economic Ecosystem



The Intergenerational Economic Engine

5. Partnerships

Reinvestment: The stabilized family ensures the next generation of girls remains in school.

4. Gender Equality

Family Stability: Mothers leverage increased stability and Mamamoni micro-loans to launch localized businesses.



1. Input: Girl masters digital capabilities.

A Makoko beneficiary coded an app connecting her father's fishing community directly to buyers, eliminating exploitative middlemen.

3. Reduced Inequalities

Community Wealth: Local commerce is optimized, retaining capital within the settlement.

Unprecedented Scale: The Impact Footprint

10,000+

Girls & Women Reached with direct interventions

16

African countries hosting active ambassador networks and alumni, including Ghana, South Sudan, and Botswana

10+

Active, highly targeted programs running simultaneously.

2012

A decade-plus track record of continuous grassroots to continental expansion

Continuous generation of functional apps, secured internship placements, and widespread GirlsCoding club establishment.

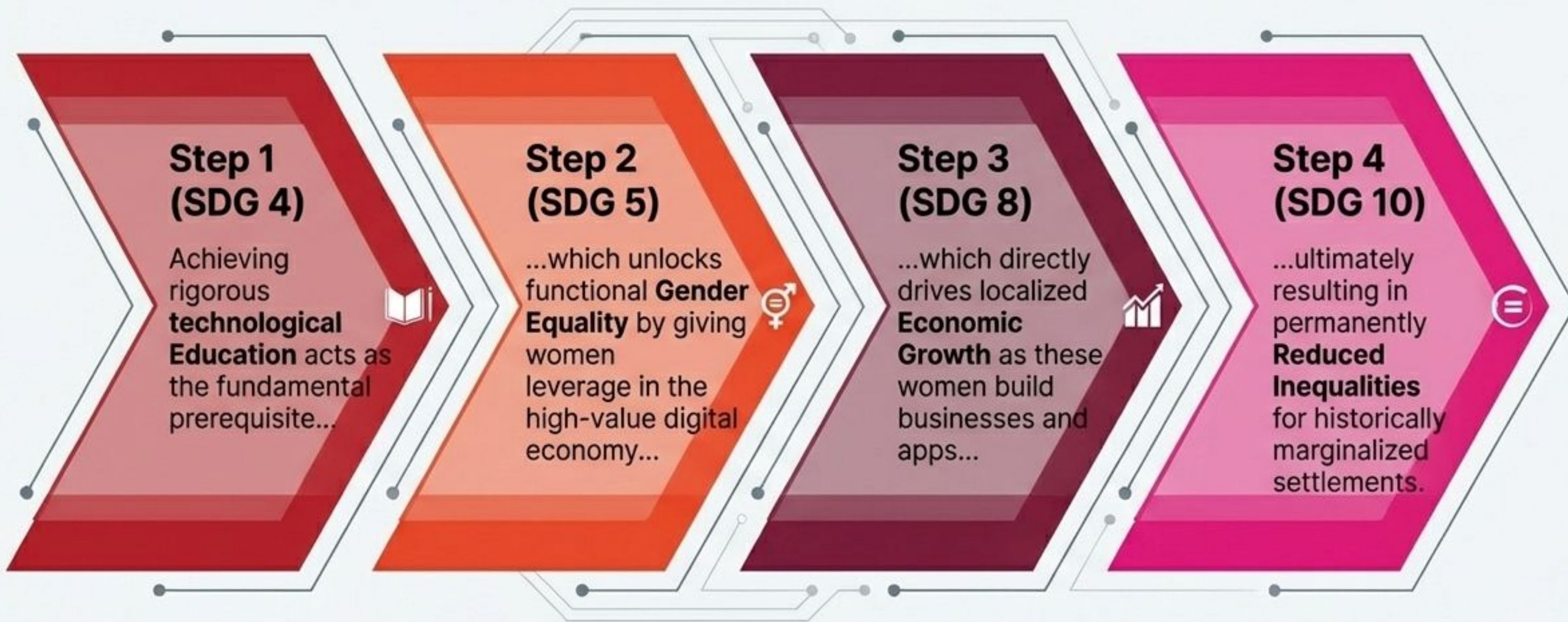
Direct Operationalization of the UN SDGs

The SDG Operationalization Matrix

UN Goal	Intervention Vehicle	Verifiable Outcome
 SDG 4: Quality Ed	GirlsCoding & GirlsInSTEM	Free, structured tech education for underserved demographics.
 SDG 5: Gender Eq	GC Mentors & Safe Space	Eradicating systemic barriers to female STEM and economic participation.
 SDG 8: Econ Growth	Empowered Hands & Mamamoni	Financial independence before 18 and maternal micro-enterprises.
 SDG 10: Reduced Ineq	Makoko Origin Strategy	Targeted wealth creation in the world's most vulnerable informal settlements.
 SDG 17: Partnerships	Institutional Coalitions	Joint initiatives with UN agencies, international governments, and local bodies.

The Foundational Domino Effect of Goal Integration

The SDG Dependency Chain



Global Validation and Systems Recognition

Wall of Validation

Media & Public Impact

- CNN Hero (2018)
- BBC 100 Women in Tech (2018)
- Woman of the Year in Technology (2017)

Academic & Policy Rigor

- Harvard Kennedy School Mason Fellowship (2021)
- U.S. International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) Alumna

Systems Change & Innovation

- Ashoka Fellow (2022, recognized for systems-changing solutions)
- Adrian Cheng Fellow
- Ashoka Youth Champion (2017)
- YTech100

Civic Honors

- Honorary Citizen of the City of Pensacola, USA.

Strategic Coalitions: Executing SDG 17

Cluster 1: Global Agencies

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA - advocacy on girl-child education).

Cluster 2: Diplomatic Missions

Australian High Commission Nigeria, U.S. Missions in Nigeria.

Cluster 3: Academic & Economic

Harvard Kennedy School Social Innovation + Change Initiative, Mamamoni.

Cluster 4: Governance

Local Government Bodies, Pan-African Civil Society Ambassador Networks.

Pearls Africa Collaborative Network

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graph TD; C1[Cluster 1: Global Agencies] --- C[Central Hub]; C2[Cluster 2: Diplomatic Missions] --- C; C3[Cluster 3: Academic & Economic] --- C; C4[Cluster 4: Governance] --- C; C --- C[Central Hub];
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The Horizon: Systemic Integration and Continental Scale

- **National Integration:** Embedding the GirlsCoding and STEM curriculum directly into Nigeria's national education policy.
- **Universal Access:** Ensuring a pathway to financial independence for every girl, irrespective of economic origin.
- **Continental Accountability:** Holding governments across Africa accountable to their commitments to girls' education through the foundation's 16-country ambassador network.

We want girls to be creators of tech, not mere users. Watching them write code is beautiful. Many of them never touched a computer before they got here.

— Abisoye Ajayi-Akinfolarin