

WOMEN IN DIGITAL HEALTH EVENT IN GHANA



Empowering future female leaders

EVENT OVERVIEW

On September 17–18, 2024, the Digital Innovation in Pandemic Control (DIPC) project hosted a Women in Digital Health event in Accra, Ghana. The event brought together female students, professionals, and leaders to inspire and equip women for impactful careers in digital health.

Inspiring a new generation of digital health leaders



Participants and organizers at the Ghana Women in Digital Health Event, September 17-18, 2024. Photo: Magadou Media/GIZ

Organized by Digital Square at PATH, the Ghana Health Service (GHS), and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the event aimed to address the gender gap in digital health by introducing participants to practical skills, key roles, and career pathways within the field. It provided an interactive platform for women to learn from experienced leaders, gain hands-on exposure to digital health tools, and connect with public and private sector stakeholders.

Aligned with Ghana's Policy and Strategy on Digital Health (2023–2027)¹, this event emphasized the importance of fostering a skilled workforce and creating an enabling environment for digital health innovations. It also helped advance more impactful health solutions in Ghana and beyond by focusing on both local digital health professional growth and women's empowerment.

Program highlights

The event offered a multifaceted program designed to educate, inspire, and connect participants, featuring key activities that included:

- Engagement and participation:** The event attracted 95 women, including students and early-career professionals, who wanted to explore career opportunities in digital health.
- Career role exploration:** Sessions introduced participants to critical roles like project managers, business analysts, and software developers. Discussions clarified responsibilities, required skills, and potential career pathways.
- Interactive workshops:** Hands-on activities provided practical exposure to digital health systems and collaborative project workflows. One participant noted that the workshops demystified roles and enhanced understanding of stakeholder perspectives.
- Inspiring keynotes:** Female digital health leaders, including Fatou Fall (Africa Regional Director, PATH), shared their career stories, emphasizing resilience and determination in male-dominated fields. Dr. Baaba da Costa Vroom (Senior Lecturer, University of Ghana) encouraged participants to leverage technology for continuous learning and professional growth.
- Networking opportunities:** A “Dig into Digital” networking session connected participants with organizations like DHIS2/HISP Ghana, Medtrack, PATH, and Zipline. Attendees discussed innovations, industry trends, and career opportunities.

1. Ghana Health Service. Policy and Strategy on Digital Health, 2023-2027. 2023. Available at: <https://ghs.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/POLICY%20&%20STRATEGY%202023-2027.pdf>

LASTING IMPACT

Impact and alignment

The event's design and execution directly supported Ghana's Policy and Strategy on Digital Health (2023–2027) by contributing to its objective of establishing a qualified and digitally skilled workforce. By introducing young women to technical and managerial roles in digital health, the event focused on sharing knowledge and insights to inspire participants to explore opportunities that contribute meaningfully to the development and implementation of digital health solutions.

Further, the collaboration between public and private sector stakeholders at the event fostered an innovation-friendly environment, building partnerships and ideas that will benefit Ghana's health ecosystem. For example, the event's emphasis on interoperability may help support Ghana's objective of improving connectivity and communication between digital systems.

Workforce inclusivity leads to systems that are better designed to address the needs of all users. By focusing on women, the initiative aligned with global commitments to close the gender gap in technology and address a major systemic barrier to digital health advancement. The enthusiasm and demand for the event also helped lay the groundwork for replicating such initiatives in Ghana and across other geographies.

Participant reflections

Attendees shared overwhelmingly positive feedback about the event. Many participants expressed that the event challenged their initial perceptions of digital health as solely technical or IT-focused. After the event, they recognized the many roles involved, including project management, analysis, and system design. Participant Rebecca Yennumi Kombian remarked that the event highlighted Ghana's progress in digitalizing healthcare and inspired her to explore ways she could contribute. Others emphasized practical knowledge gained through interactive workshops and how this exposure demystified complex concepts like system interoperability and data management.

For many, the opportunity to hear from successful female leaders in the field was a highlight. The speakers' honest discussions about overcoming challenges in a male-dominated space resonated deeply, motivating attendees to pursue their aspirations with confidence. Participants also appreciated the networking opportunities, which allowed them to connect with leading local organizations and learn about real-world applications of digital health tools.

Overall, participants appreciated gaining knowledge as well as a sense of empowerment and clarity about their roles in shaping the future of digital health in Ghana and around the world.

Putting women in the driver's seat of innovation

The Ghana Women in Digital Health event enabled women to explore career opportunities, gain practical skills and knowledge, and connect with industry leaders in the digital health sector. The workshops, networking opportunities, and mentorship enabled participants to explore the field while emphasizing the importance of collaboration in fostering inclusive and sustainable digital health systems. As Ghana advances toward a fully digitized health ecosystem, initiatives like this event, which set a model to invest in future women leaders, will help ensure that women are central to innovation.



A participant raises her hand during a Q&A session of the event. Photo: Magadou Media/GIZ



CONTACTS:

GIZ:

Tessa Lennemann, Project Lead
tessa.lennemann@giz.de
DIPC@giz.de

Digital Square:

Gracey Vaughn, Global Project Lead
gvaughn@path.org
www.digitalsquare.org