

# SHE's GREAT!

Supporting Her Empowerment – Girls' Resilience, Enterprise, and Technology

SHE's GREAT! Benin  
Country Highlight



## Overview

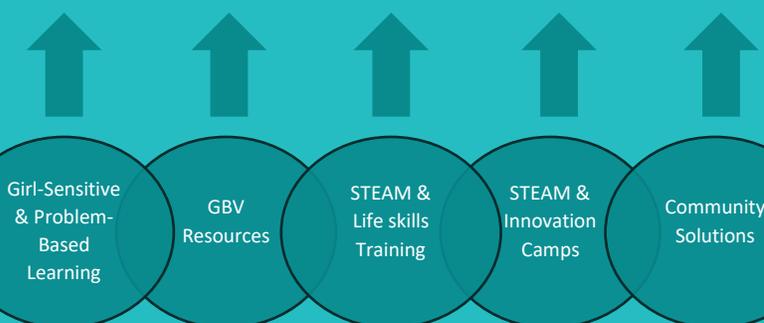
**SHE's GREAT!** inspires girls to be protagonists of their own change and connects them to skills and community support to address and overcome the complex social and economic challenges that girls face around the world. A key objective of the initiative is to present girls with opportunities in **Science, Engineering, Technology, Arts and Design, and Mathematics (STEAM)**. This in turn will provide the foundation, skills and confidence for more girls to enter non-traditional fields of study and enable them to overcome negative stereotypes, while providing the essential means to thrive and serve as role models for other girls. In addition to imparting them with improved technical skills and leadership training, *SHE's GREAT!* links girls to networks of mentors and partners eager to support them as they execute their STEAM Projects and learn new strategies for continuing their education, pursuing careers which are not traditional for women, and addressing gender-based violence (GBV), including harmful traditional practices.



## SHE's GREAT! Model



Empowered girls with skills make change



Mentors, Community Champions, Supportive Male Peers,  
Advisory Panel Organizations  
**Support Network**

The *SHE's GREAT!* Model maintains that when girls gain the **knowledge, abilities, and self-efficacy** to make and act on informed decisions, they become more empowered to succeed in life. **Engaging girls in STEAM activities** through in- and out-of-school clubs and camps, not only defies stereotypes and promotes positive gender role modeling but also introduces girls to STEAM opportunities for discovering the power of innovation to support their academic study and income creation. **Enabling environments**, made up of a **diverse support network** of peers, male champions, community members, and role models, that actively address GBV, including harmful traditional practices and barriers to girls, will lead to sustainable community solutions and societal change. By increasing knowledge, STEAM capacities, and support from enabling environments, *SHE's GREAT!* addresses gender inequalities, encourages girls to pursue STEAM opportunities, creates innovative community solutions, and contributes to more positive perceptions of girls' contributions and roles.

## SHE's GREAT! Benin: Results and Sustainability

In 2019, through partnerships with local governments and NGOs, *SHE's GREAT!* Benin implemented a series of STEAM camps. The camps targeted both urban youth, in the capital of Cotonou, and rural youth, in the northern city of Parakou. In total the camps welcomed a total of 54 girls and 16 boys, as male champions from schools across the country. The camps emphasized an inclusive hands-on approach to teaching participants agricultural science techniques relevant to their communities and incorporated trainings on STEAM skills such as robotics, renewable energy, app design, and sustainable agricultural practices. In addition to STEAM skills, the camps also provided various soft skills to compliment an awareness training on gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices that linked the participants to GBV resources to support them as strong advocates in their communities. In order to sustain the impact of these camps, IREX will work with and through local partners to develop short-term training, mentoring, and apprenticeship opportunities for girls and boys aged 16 to 20. Follow-on activities will enable them to hone their STEAM skills to, not only generate income, but to promote increased opportunities for girls in their communities. The sustainability of *SHE's GREAT!* Benin has been strengthened by several key elements:



**STEAM focused follow-on projects** hosted by participating schools, and supported by local technical experts, enable camp participants and teachers to apply new STEAM knowledge and share newly acquired skills with peers.

**The Benin Steering Committee** has been instrumental in adapting the *SHE's GREAT!* approach to the local context, and it has been critical to rallying the support of local communities. The *SHE's GREAT!* Benin Steering Committee is made up of Ministers of the Government of Benin, Sèmè City (Benin's premier center for innovation and entrepreneurship facilitated by the Government), UN representatives, local NGO directors, international foundations, U.S. Embassy staff, and private industry leaders representing companies such as MTN and Caterpillar.



**SHE's GREAT! is a Global Initiative...**that will adapt the lessons learned in Benin to serve girls in Kyrgyz Republic, Ethiopia, and Indonesia. Please stay connected and follow *SHE's GREAT!*'s upcoming activities:

<https://www.irex.org/project/sheisgreat>



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