

WeRobotics – Fly Like a Girl

Our objective is to help develop a dedicated program to increase the number of women in STEM by providing young women from low-income families with both hard and soft skills that peak their interest in STEM while providing them with concrete robotics skills that will help them in future jobs.

We will run our weeklong *Fly Like A Girl* adventure camps at each of our Flying Labs in Nepal, Tanzania, Senegal, Peru, Panama and the South Pacific. The adventure camps will be specifically geared towards girls from low-income families who undergo a rigorous application process would not otherwise have the opportunity to learn about aerial and marine robotics. The adventure camps will provide “hard skills” by teaching young women how to use these robotics solutions safely and responsibly for a range of social good applications including wildlife protection, environmental monitoring and humanitarian aid. The weeklong training will include a dedicated hands-on project in partnership with one or more local, national and/or international organizations. The program will also include training on communications and public speaking since participants will be invited to give formal presentations on their final projects and findings. Additionally, depending on the needs of each cohort and country context, we will also include soft-skills modules that promote leadership, career guidance, and challenge gender norms and build self-esteem. In countries where appropriate organizations and leaders are available we will seek to provide the girls with one or two leadership talks with women in STEM.

The summer camps will be free to participants who will be nominated by their local schools, women’s and girls’ organizations including local homes for girls (orphanages). We will consider piloting a hybrid payment system at each of them camps where girls with higher incomes subsidize those with lower income in order to develop a sustainable model moving forward. In this regard, *Fly Like a Girl* will seek out public and private sector partners that may be interested in participating in the camps with a two-fold goal: 1) to have them participate as “clients” to ensure the girls projects are demand-driven, practical and based in local demand for robotics; 2) to find additional source of financial sponsorship for the program. Additionally, at the beginning and end of the program we will engage the families of the girls’ and provide them with a short 2 hour sessions of soft skills that help set the stage for the families to support and continue supporting their girls’ education and career development.

Upon completing their training, participants will have the opportunity to continue collaborating with their local Flying Labs. The latter will also invite participants to apply for a scholarship to study science and technology at a college or a university in their country. Our *Fly Like a Girl* program is dedicated to improving female participation in STEM. We have already run a very successful proof of concept with our Pacific Flying Labs in Fiji where girls (aged 12-17) from a local orphanage participated in our hands-on program using aerial and marine robotics for the protection of coral reefs and disaster risk reduction. Empowered women are critical for the environment and global economy. Reducing the gap between women’s and men’s labor force participation will lead to faster economic growth. Hence our keen interest to run our *Fly Like A Girl* program across each of our Flying Labs in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the South Pacific on a regular basis.

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