“Global Engineer Girls” Program

Kosovo - July 2025

Social Impact Research



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Qualitative Project Design

The main purpose of the research is to understand the social impact of the Global Engineer Girls (GEG) project on different stakeholders of the program. This report contains the findings on Kosovo Program. Obtained insights will be used for PR purposes and also for developing future strategies of GEG program.

Within the scope of qualitative research, a total of 8 Online In-Depth Interviews with geg scholars were conducted in Kosovo.

Sample Definition:

18-24 years old female University Student in Engineering Faculties Who has been a Global Engineer Girl program Scholar in the last 2 years

Online Indepth Interviews #	Age	Gender	Profile	Criteria
8	18-24 (Balanced)	Female	University Student*	Global Engineer Girl Program Scholar

**Computer engineering, Mechanical and Computer Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Structural Engineering, Economic Engineering, and Engineering Management.*

Gaining Context



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Context: Gender Inequality and Cultural Norms in Kosovo



Kosovo has one of the lowest female labor force participation rates in Europe, with less than 20% of women employed compared to over 50% of men, reflecting deeply entrenched gender norms that limit women's economic opportunities[1]. This gap contributes significantly to economic disparities, with Kosovo women earning approximately €0.84 for every €1 men earn, a difference most pronounced in high-revenue sectors like STEM and engineering[2]. Women's overrepresentation in lower-paid or informal sectors, coupled with their predominant role in unpaid caregiving, further restricts their access to professional STEM careers[3].

Cultural expectations in Kosovo traditionally frame women as primary caregivers, leading families and educational systems to steer girls toward "female-appropriate" fields such as education or healthcare, rather than technical or engineering disciplines[4]. Studies indicate that stereotypes, a lack of technical practical opportunities, and the absence of female role models create barriers to women entering STEM fields, often pushing them toward less empowered career options[5]. In response, organizations such as UN Women and UNDP have established initiatives, including STEM scholarships, women-in-STEM networks, and mentorship programs, to break these gendered pathways and support women's entry and retention in technical professions[6].

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Agenda

01 Being a Woman & Gender Roles

02 Education & Vocational Perceptions

03 Current Studies & Expectations On Undergraduate Education

04 Meeting the Global Engineer Girls

05 Evaluation Of The Global Engineer Girls

06 Evaluating The Impact Of Global Engineer Girls On Social Life

07 Conclusions & Recommendations



01

Being A Woman & Gender Roles



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Society's High Expectations of Women



A woman in engineering faces more than a career choice; she navigates a quiet yet persistent negotiation between personal ambition and the weight of societal expectations. Women in the field encounter layered experiences filled with subtle challenges, constant pressure to prove themselves, and the silent questioning that often accompanies their presence in male-dominated technical spaces.

Society implicitly expects women to balance caregiving and professional goals, impacting career paths and everyday tasks.

These expectations are reflected in the everyday division of household tasks, in the unspoken assumption that women adjust their career paths to meet family needs, and in the surprise of others when a young woman leads a construction site analysis or manages machinery.

These tensions start early, as toys, colors, and activities divide boys and girls, shaping initial ideas of what is "appropriate" for women. High school and early university years mark critical moments when societal whispers intensify, steering girls away from "difficult" or "masculine" fields such as engineering.

"One of the main things, I think, is that the moment a woman starts a family, it is expected that she will take care of the children and the whole family. I think this is the main expectation that creates the difference between the genders."
(Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering, 20, final year)

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What Society Still Tells Women



Within their families, young women reflect on inherited gender roles while imagining different futures. Young women reflect on inherited gender roles, noting household tasks are still widely seen as women's duty. They challenge these expectations, seeking partnerships based on mutual support and shared obligations.

Their path in engineering reflects more than a career choice; it becomes part of how they redefine identity. With steady resolve, they push back against limiting narratives and frame their presence in the field as a growing norm. This helps create space for others to enter technical careers without sacrificing family or ambition.

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Family Support against Societal Stereotypes



Supportive families are critical in guiding young women into engineering, encouraging them despite societal expectations. Parents and siblings frequently encourage them to take on challenges and trust in their abilities, offering a counterbalance to societal expectations.

Stereotypes persist: women face subtle messages that technical tasks are for men, and female engineers' instructions may carry less weight without male reinforcement. During internships, instructions from female engineers may carry less weight unless reinforced by male colleagues.

Regional differences also influence these dynamics. Urban areas typically provide more supportive settings, while rural communities shift more gradually. Still, change is underway across Kosovo as more girls pursue engineering, contribute meaningfully to projects, and build confidence in their technical capabilities.

"Both of my parents were working, so I had enough role models in my life. I am glad that experience was passed on, because it plays a great role and makes it possible to transfer to the children."
(Faculty of Civil Engineering, 21, Graduate)

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At Home, Roles Still Matter



Gender roles are gradually shifting at home; while mothers traditionally handle domestic duties and fathers finances, many households aim for balance. Exposure to educated women in the family challenges norms, leading to more equitable views. Most participants view themselves as different from their mothers, aspiring to greater independence and professional engagement, often enabled by improved opportunities and societal changes.

While girls are still more often tasked with household duties, especially in traditional settings, some families encourage shared responsibilities based on individual personality and availability. Parental attitudes vary, but many actively support daughters' education and independence, recognizing the need for professional preparedness. Overall, participants report feeling supported, though subtle differences in expectations and treatment between siblings remain present.

"Things can be very different. I have finished university and plan to work, unlike my mom who stays at home. At the same time, new tools are being created that might make housework easier, maybe even handled by a robot, so I might not have to do it myself".
(Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 22, master 2nd year)

02

Education & Vocational Perceptions



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Education as a Path to Independence and Possibility



For many young women, education represents more than attending classes or earning a diploma. It serves as a path to personal independence, a foundation for meaningful careers, and a way to contribute to society.

Education expands minds, shapes character, builds confidence, and offers a life distinct from previous generations.

It functions as both a practical and personal tool, offering skills for employment while supporting a deeper desire for growth. Education equips young women to navigate challenges as strong individuals within their communities. It prepares them for the job market while also fostering continuous development throughout life.

"Personally, I have always been very connected to education. In my free time, I would read, do my homework, and always try to expand my horizons. I had a hunger for knowledge, and I still have it. It is one of my weaknesses."
(Faculty of Civil Engineering, 22, final year)

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Dreams and Perspectives on Education



Career choices often involve a tension between personal interests and the practical need for job security. Childhood dreams in fields such as acting, astrophysics, or law frequently shift toward programming, engineering, or environmental studies in response to concerns about stability and employability. The process of choosing a career requires balancing passion with realistic opportunities, often shaped by financial circumstances and family guidance.

Internal conflicts can arise as girls navigate societal expectations and personal ambitions, especially when considering entry into male-dominated professions.

Education is equally important for both genders, with outcomes reflecting economic conditions and family support more than gender alone. In fact, girls often appear more focused and motivated in studies, recognizing education as a secure path to independence and stability.

"I think that women take education more seriously. Sometimes men just go for it to have a degree, while for women, it means more and they take it more seriously."
(Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 22, master 2nd year)

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Choosing a ‘Right’ Field of Study



Educational and career choices rarely happen in isolation. Family influence plays a major role, particularly from immediate family members who are often supportive. Extended relatives or people in the wider community sometimes respond with skepticism, especially when women choose traditionally male-dominated careers.

Decisions are rarely based solely on passion; employability, economic background, and gender expectations strongly shape paths. Many find purpose and belonging in their chosen field, even if it wasn't their initial dream. Even if their chosen profession is not their first dream.

“There is no strong distinction by study field, though rare extreme cases exist. Economic background and birth order have more influence. For example, I study engineering, while my younger sister became a nail artist after leaving school, choosing a less secure path.”
(Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 24, graduate)

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Influence and Support From Close Circle in Choosing the Right Field



Most of the women believe that success is not tied to gender. They see effort, interest, and ability as the true foundations for achievement. However, they also recognize that gender bias continues to shape their experiences, especially in technical or male-dominated spaces.

The number of women in engineering, particularly software development, is growing, but stereotypes remain. Professors may question women's contributions or overlook them. There are moments when a male peer receives praise for saying something a woman already said moments earlier.

Despite the imbalance, participants mention that they do know women in these professions, including relatives, professionals they've met through internships, or women highlighted in the media. These women are often described as strong, dedicated, and persistent, having to prove themselves more than their male counterparts.

"Most of my professors are men. They are very welcoming, but they hesitate to talk to us as women or to engage in conversation, and I don't know why. If the effort to avoid making distinctions came from the professors, it could influence others as well. For example, professors shape the opinions of students, especially the male students in our group". (Faculty of Civil Engineering, 22, final year)

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Real World's Dynamics vs. Personal Ambitions in Building Profession or Career



Most agree that professional choices should not be limited by gender. Still, many observe that certain roles are socially framed as more suitable for one gender over the other. Careers that require heavy physical labor or constant fieldwork are often assumed to be more suited to men. This assumption is not because of capability but because of social norms and workplace culture. Women are more present in roles that require emotional intelligence or direct interaction with people, such as teaching, healthcare, or human resources. These are also the fields where women tend to receive more encouragement and support. Leadership roles or technical fields still tend to be associated with men, although this perception is gradually changing. Participants point to examples of successful women in engineering, entrepreneurship, and tech innovation. These examples are essential in reshaping what is seen as possible and in offering visible role models.

"I don't believe there are professions that women can't do. My mind goes to jobs that are physically more demanding, but even then, for every Olympic sport, there is both a woman and a man competing. Of course, there are physical differences between us, but the opportunities still exist." - (Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 24, graduate)

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Imagining the Ideal Profession for Women



The ideal profession for women prioritizes a safe, supportive, and authentic environment over specific job tasks. They highlight the importance of flexible hours, emotional well-being, and self-confidence. Many women mention how often they see talented peers hold themselves back in male-dominated fields. The ideal job would encourage authenticity, not conformity.

They also imagine a non-hierarchical, respectful space, a workplace without pressure or judgment, where opinions are valued equally. It's about feeling motivated and seen, not just tasks.

As for current professions that come close, some mention tech and programming roles that offer remote work and autonomy. Others stress that the problem is not the profession, but the environment. Even demanding jobs can be ideal if the culture supports inclusion.

What they envision is not impossible; it already exists in parts. Their ideal is a workplace that truly enables women to succeed without sacrificing who they are.

I don't think the issue lies in the profession itself, but in the work environment. Professions aren't tied to gender. The limits in performance come from your surroundings, not the job. If you have a supportive team, the experience is completely different. In my current workplace, there's no hierarchy, and my opinion as a female intern matters just as much as the manager's, as long as it's valid. The best teams are those that value your input regardless of gender or background. (Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 24, graduate)

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Engineering as a Gendered Space



In engineering, the main challenge isn't academic work, but social perception. Women feel constant pressure to prove themselves in male-dominated settings and often receive less credit in group projects despite greater contributions.

They also notice that women gravitate more toward certain branches like design and software, while fields such as robotics or mechanical engineering attract fewer female students. Some believe this is not about ability, but about how welcoming or hostile the environment is.

Still, optimism is growing. Women say the numbers are shifting. More girls enter engineering each year. Support networks are forming, including mentorships and women-centered initiatives that help bridge confidence and access gaps.

"I think that when it comes to academic staff, many may hold biases, where in group projects or discussions, the assumption is often that a male student is the leader, even if he contributed little, while the female student who led the work is overlooked." - (Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 24, graduate)

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World Through Women's Perspectives



A world built solely by men often appears functional but lacking in warmth, color, and inclusivity. Such environments may be practical yet overlook human-centered design and attention to detail.

In contrast, a world shaped by women is often envisioned as vibrant, inclusive, and attentive to the needs of all. These spaces tend to feel welcoming and community-oriented, designed to support well-being and create a sense of life and care within the built environment.

When I imagine a world built by women, I see development, but also a cleaner, more inclusive environment with spaces for children, the elderly, recreation, and nature." - (Faculty of Civil Engineering, 21, Graduate)

03

Current Studies & Expections On Undergraduate Education



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Scholarships and Support Along the Way



"When it comes to my studies, I have been very well informed, but in terms of state support, there wasn't much in the past. I was in the first year of my bachelor's when the state started supporting women, and I didn't have much information about it at the time." - (Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 21, master 1st year)

In recent years, most of the participants observe a clear and encouraging shift in favor of women who pursue university studies in engineering. They describe seeing more female students in classrooms that were once dominated by men, and they recognize the positive impact of scholarships and initiatives specifically designed to support women in STEM. These programs, which once targeted women exclusively before expanding to a broader audience, are seen as important entry points for young women to join and remain in technical fields.

Academic support exists, but it does not always come through official or institutional channels. Instead, many participants hear about available scholarships, workshops, or academic programs through informal means, such as conversations with professors, classmates, student groups, or social media. Few describe receiving clear, structured information directly from their university. Despite this, many women actively seek out and apply to programs such as STEM scholarships, merit-based aid, and practical training courses, including those on CNC machines, energy efficiency, ISO standards, or local engineering forums. Several also mention Erasmus and short-term exchanges as valuable experiences.

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Beyond Financial Aid: Building Futures with Internships



One of the clearest examples of financial aid making a difference is the ability to purchase a laptop. This is not seen as a luxury, but as a necessary gateway to fully participate in academic life, allowing students to complete assignments, join online trainings, code, research, and eventually apply for jobs or internships. With this support, some students are able to study without needing to work part-time, giving them the time and focus to succeed academically. For others, owning a personal device transforms not only how they study, but how they feel about themselves: more prepared, more independent, more capable. Overall, the women describe the support they have received as effective and meaningful, especially when it directly supports their learning process. However, several gaps remain. Most of the participants feel that their studies lack practical experience. They speak about machines and processes they learn about in theory, but rarely get to use. This gap between academic content and real-world practice makes engineering feel abstract and disconnected from industry. Many express the need for earlier and more frequent hands-on experiences, starting in the first year of study.

"I think the best help you can give a student, besides kind words, is financial support, because they'll use it for something that helps their learning. In my case, I bought a high-performance laptop for about €900, and I still use it at work. I even hesitate to replace it because I associate it with all my successes." - (Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 24, Graduate)

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Beyond Financial Aid: Strengthening Pathways with Mentorship



Another missing component is consistent and long-term mentorship. While some students find professors who encourage them informally, there is no structured system to guide students through decisions about specialization, internships, job preparation, or graduate studies. Several participants express that they would feel much stronger in their academic and professional paths if they had access to someone who could offer guidance, direction, and honest feedback, someone who had been in their place and knew the path ahead.

While many have already applied to and benefited from existing scholarship programs, some are also looking ahead to future opportunities. A few are considering applying for international exchanges, postgraduate programs, or technical certifications. However, many emphasize that their ability to do so depends largely on access to timely and reliable information. They note that many valuable programs exist, but go unnoticed due to poor communication, limited outreach, or overly complex application processes. When asked why such programs exist, they say it is clear these initiatives were created to bridge long-standing gaps, not only financial, but also social and institutional, that have historically kept women from pursuing technical careers.

"Honestly, the university, not much, apart from some professors that are there for the right reasons and that are supportive." - (Faculty of Civil Engineering, 21, Graduate)

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Making Engineering Visible and Welcoming for Women



To attract more women to engineering, visibility and early exposure are key. Young women need to see relatable female role models who have succeeded, faced similar doubts, and found their way forward. They recommend that institutions invite practicing female engineers to speak to students, host open days in labs, and share real-life stories that challenge stereotypes. Several say that when they first chose engineering, they had no idea what the field actually involved. It was only after they started their studies that they discovered what it meant to be an engineer. This lack of early clarity, they argue, can be discouraging.

To encourage women in areas of engineering where female representation remains low, participants suggest a range of measures. These include building stronger female student communities, offering mentoring circles, creating spaces for sharing challenges, and giving young women the chance to see and touch the tools they will work with. They also emphasize the need to promote a classroom culture where women's contributions are taken seriously and where gender bias is actively challenged.

"We also have many successful women. So, It's about motivation and information about the financial aspect and Is that it is possible to do this, so they need to see some role models. So, we discussed about more general stuff and general roles and your academic achievements and your future plans."
(Faculty of Civil Engineering, 21, Graduate)

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Meeting The Global Engineer Girls Program



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GEG: More Than a Program



When the young women reflect on the Global Engineer Girls (GEG) program, they do so with a mixture of gratitude, pride, and emotional depth. For them, GEG is not just a program. It represents recognition, community, and a sense of belonging in a field where they are often made to feel like outsiders. Most describe GEG as a rare and powerful space where they feel seen, encouraged, and emotionally supported, not only as students, but as women trying to navigate engineering.

For many, their first encounter with GEG happens through professors or student networks. Some are invited directly, others hear about it in passing. When they first learn about it, they describe feeling intrigued and hopeful. They are drawn by the idea that someone has thought to create something just for girls in engineering something that goes beyond classes and grades, and speaks directly to their experiences.

"I can say that GED has opened doors for me for many, many doors It was It was the key thing that made me grow in my profession It was good support." -(Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 22, master 2nd year)

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Discovering GEG: How It All Began



Students first learn about Global Engineer Girls (GEG) through neon-colored posters at their universities, social media posts, word of mouth from professors, or in-person sessions led by program representatives. These initial encounters often spark both excitement and hesitation, as some question their qualifications or whether the program will meet their expectations.

Despite early doubts, the clear and welcoming call for applications, which emphasizes mentorship, training, and internships, encourages engagement. These first moments of contact often represent a shift away from routine and from societal messages that discourage women from pursuing technical fields. The existence of a program dedicated to supporting young women in engineering creates a sense of possibility where it once felt out of reach.

"During my third year of studies, I saw posters at the university that caught my attention. I stopped to read them and learned about a program that supports girls in engineering. Two GEG representatives came and had an open discussion about the program, and that's when I decided to apply." - (Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 22, master 1st year)

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Why Students Recommend GEG



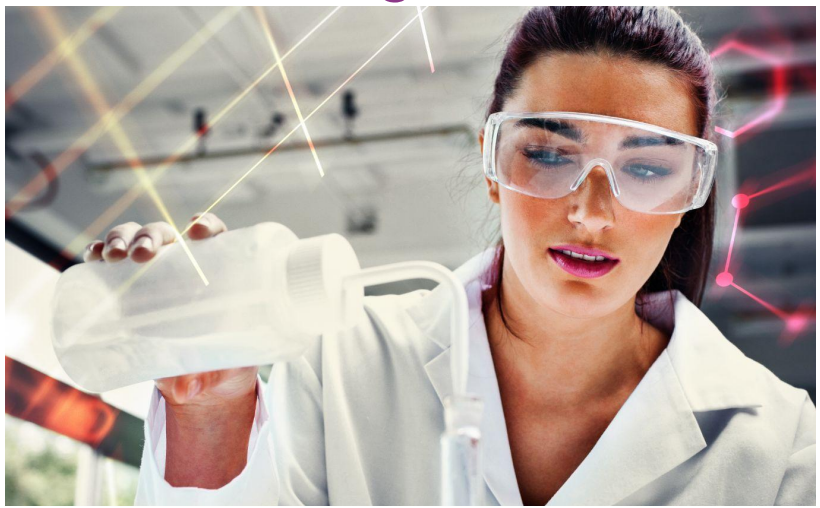
Students are actively recommending GEG to their peers because they see it as a valuable, motivating, and well-structured experience. They highlight the professionalism of the program, emphasizing that organizers are serious, detail-oriented, and constantly check in to ensure everything is going well and to offer space for continuous feedback and improvement. Several participants note that GEG provides real training opportunities, particularly useful for girls in electrical and computer engineering, and they feel it is especially beneficial for women in technical fields.

Many students take initiative to encourage their younger peers to apply, recognizing that first-hand explanations about the application process and program benefits are often more helpful than online information. Some share GEG opportunities directly with others, such as via LinkedIn posts or personal messages, because they view their own experience as so positive that they want others to benefit as well. The sense of motivation, clarity, and peer support that GEG fosters makes it stand out as a program worth recommending.

"When I saw the post on LinkedIn, I shared it and even sent it directly to girls I knew weren't part of the program. I see it as a very positive experience and genuinely wanted to pass it on to others."(Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 24, graduate)

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Envisioning the Program Before Joining



Before joining, GEG is often viewed as a platform for learning and connection, with expectations centered on workshops, live mentorship, and networking opportunities with professionals. Many anticipate a program that offers practical support to complement academic studies and prepare them for the labor market.

In most cases, the experience surpasses these expectations. GEG provides a comprehensive combination of soft skills training, hands-on experiences, scholarships, and access to international conferences, expanding students' perspectives on what is possible in their careers.

The application process is described as clear and supportive, offering space to express motivations and aspirations through interviews conducted online or at university campuses. While faculties offer moral encouragement, the decision to apply is student-led, reflecting personal initiative and investment in the future.

Many choose not to inform their families until after acceptance. Once informed, families often respond with pride and encouragement, reinforcing students' confidence and underscoring the role of family support during key transitions..

"I didn't know there would be visits abroad and within Kosovo. All I knew was that it provided internships, and that was the main reason I applied, because the university doesn't offer this in the first or second year."
(Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering, 22, final year)

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Finding Purpose and Confidence Within the Program



Many join Global Engineer Girls (GEG) with the aim of gaining practical experience, developing professionally, and connecting with other young women in engineering. Through mentorship and access to real-world projects, the program helps bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical application, offering greater clarity on future career paths.

Participation in GEG often builds confidence. Moments such as attending events alongside other female engineers or completing technical training that once felt out of reach contribute to a stronger sense of capability. For many, the program shifts how they see themselves within engineering, helping them envision roles as professionals who can lead and innovate.

GEG is widely seen as a valuable resource for young women in engineering. It supports academic and professional development while also creating a sense of community that is often lacking in technical fields. By sharing positive experiences, current members encourage others to apply, helping expand the number of young women who see engineering as a space where they belong.

"I started to connect with people to get more information and training, and I became full of knowledge that prepared me for the future job market. I also became more confident in public speaking and expressing my opinions, which I learned through the soft skills training. I didn't realize how important these trainings were at the beginning." - (Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering, 22, final year)

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How GEG Makes Students Feel – Visual Elicitation Technique

During the visual reflection exercise, the image of joined hands emerges as the most frequently chosen, symbolizing unity, support, and collective strength found through GEG. This image reflects the experience of being surrounded by other young women who share similar goals, challenges, and hopes within engineering.

Other images, such as a Superman figure, represent a growing sense of confidence and empowerment, while visuals like balloons and supportive animals climbing upward illustrate expanded horizons and the encouragement to pursue ambitious goals.

These visual choices reflect themes of warmth, connection, and progress. They highlight how GEG fosters a sense of belonging and shared purpose, reinforcing that with community support, young women can confidently pursue engineering and turn aspirations into real possibilities.









"There were many photos that could represent GEG, but maybe the one with the joined hands says it best. In that picture, I see support, harmony, and shared knowledge. GEG had exactly that. It introduced us to other girls we had never met and made us support each other with our ideas." (Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 21, master 1st year)

05

Evaluation Of The Global Engineer Girls Program

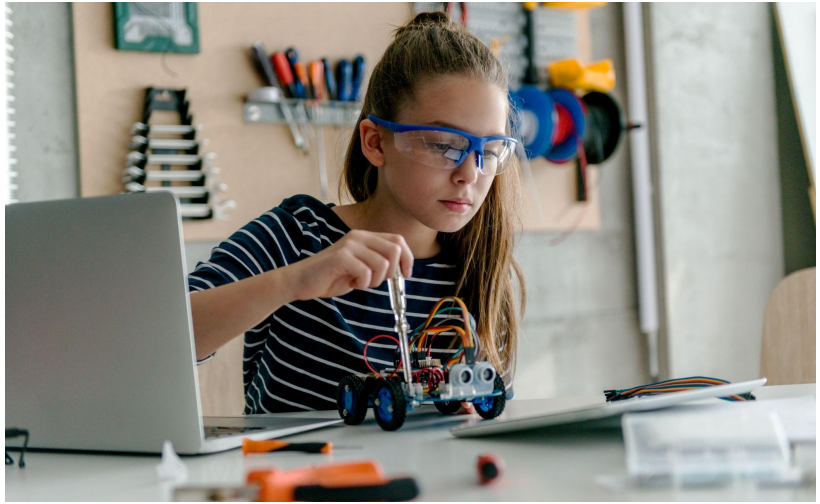


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Strengths of the Program



Many participants described the program as a transformative experience, offering meaningful professional and personal development. The internship opportunities stood out as particularly valuable, helping students bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world application. Some students highlighted how their internships directly led to extended opportunities or employment, underscoring the program's practical relevance. The mentorship component was also praised when mentors were engaged and accessible, with one student describing the guidance as "multi-layered support" that encouraged her to pursue specific career paths and overcome doubts.

Students deeply appreciated the international exposure, especially through the trip to Istanbul. This created a sense of connection and sisterhood with girls from other countries, inspiring confidence and motivation through shared experiences and success stories. The soft skills training, although mixed in feedback, was often noted as useful, particularly sessions that focused on CV building, communication, and interview preparation. Several students also emphasized the sense of belonging and continuous support, stating that the community created through GEG helped them feel more empowered and seen. One participant noted that without GEG, she "would feel lost in this profession."

"The airport has a very advanced water treatment system. I had studied this in three subjects but had never seen a system in real life. During my internship at the airport, I finally saw it, and one of the workers was very happy to explain everything to me step by step on site. It took three hours." (Faculty of Civil Engineering, 21, Graduate)

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Improvement Areas



Despite the many positive aspects, participants identified several areas that could enhance the program's impact. One recurring issue was the mentorship structure. While some students benefited from regular, impactful mentor meetings, others reported minimal interaction, sometimes only one or two meetings over the course of the program, resulting in a sense of missed opportunity. Several participants suggested that mentors be better matched based on field of study and availability, or that younger, more accessible mentors could be added to the pool.

Another common concern was related to the training, particularly the soft skills modules. Many found them overly repetitive or not sufficiently tailored to their technical fields. The language barrier in sessions delivered by Turkish trainers, especially when done through consecutive translation, made the content hard to follow for some students. Suggestions included offering more technical and hard skills training tailored to each participant's area of study, and allowing students to help select courses or topics through voting.

"Choosing courses based on interest would be a better approach to focus more on hard skills. Of course, soft skills are also valuable, but there should be a better balance. It depends on the field, but when hard skills are offered, they are often too specific. It would be better if we could choose which ones to take and have course groups to select from."
(Faculty of Civil Engineering, 21, Graduate)

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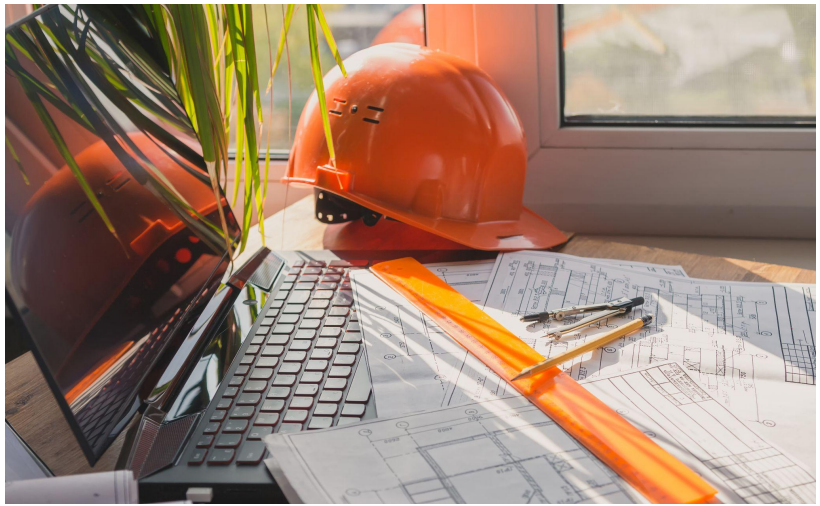
Improvement Areas Cont'd



Participants also expressed a desire for more in-person and interactive activities, noting that some events felt too presentation-focused or were impacted by scheduling conflicts with university classes. Greater clarity in program communication from the beginning, especially regarding expectations, scheduling, and benefits, was also mentioned as a way to strengthen engagement. Finally, some felt that networking opportunities among participants, especially across different countries, were underutilized, and encouraged more structured spaces to build peer connections and share experiences.

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The Core of GEG



Participants believe the program exists because its creators understand the barriers women face in engineering. They see GEG as a response to gender inequality, aiming to give young women the resources and confidence they need to stay in the field. Some say the program reflects a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, while others see it as a genuine effort to support women in male-dominated careers. The day they were accepted into the program, participants described feeling excited, surprised, and honored. There was a shared sense of validation that someone saw potential in them. Most say their expectations were met or exceeded, especially in terms of emotional support and visibility.

According to the participants, GEG offers a mix of mentorship, peer community, training sessions, and emotional empowerment. They emphasize that the program's unique value lies in how it supports the personal journey of becoming a female engineer. Some also note that GEG introduces them to professional role models.

"I think they do this to make us feel like we're not alone, that we have support behind us. Having that kind of backing makes a big difference. At the same time, it helps show others that this mindset of making gender-based distinctions needs to change." (Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 21, master 1st year)

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Sharing GEG With Others



Impressions of Global Engineer Girls (GEG) evolve over time, shaped by both anticipation and experience. The moment of acceptance often marks a significant shift, bringing a sense of hope, validation, and momentum. Although the interview process may initially cause nervousness, students feel supported throughout. Learning that friends or sisters are also accepted reinforces a sense of pride and connection from the beginning.

As engagement deepens, core elements such as scholarships, training, and internships emerge as especially valuable. GEG offers more than financial support. It provides practical experience, structured learning, and a strong sense of community that supports both academic and professional growth. The time and commitment required by the program are matched by meaningful opportunities for development.

Over time, GEG comes to represent a broader purpose. It is recognized as an initiative that empowers young women, challenges gender stereotypes, and expands access to engineering. In contexts like Kosovo, where targeted support for women in technical fields remains limited, the program plays a vital role in making engineering more visible, accessible, and inclusive.

"I shared information about the program with other girls at the university, and they joined the second generation. I had very good words about GEG, but there are two issues that could be improved." - (Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 22, master 2nd year)

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Mentors Matter



Mentorship, a core component of GEG, produces varied experiences. Having a female engineer as a mentor is often described as inspiring, but the overall impact depends on the frequency and depth of engagement. In some cases, mentorship consists of only one or two meetings, with limited guidance on technical skills or confidence-building in professional environments. A closer and more structured mentoring relationship is seen as especially valuable in addressing low confidence that may arise from societal or family expectations.

At the same time, some students benefit from highly engaged mentors who go well beyond the six required meetings. These relationships continue even after the program ends, with mentors regularly checking in, offering career advice, and encouraging persistence in the engineering field.

Mentorship also plays a symbolic role. Seeing other women succeed in engineering reinforces students' motivation and inspires them to consider becoming mentors themselves. For many, mentoring future generations represents both a form of giving back and a way to continue the cycle of support.

"My mentor looked at what possibilities were available and encouraged me to apply for different opportunities. I ended up applying for a similar program for a six-month internship, so mentorship was very fruitful in my case. I can contact the same person, so it's a continuous support that I have."
(Faculty of Civil Engineering, 21, Graduate)

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Internship Experience



Internship opportunities offered through GEG play a critical role in bridging the gap between university learning and practical experience. Hands-on exposure allows students to move beyond theoretical knowledge and engage directly with engineering processes and tools. This practical component builds confidence, offers insight into professional environments, and helps clarify what a future in engineering might look like. However, not all internships meet these expectations. Some placements focus on administrative tasks rather than technical work, limiting their relevance for engineering development. In most cases, students accept available options even when they do not align with their field of study or career goals. Flexible placements that match students' interests remain limited.

Expanding engineering-specific internship opportunities and aligning their timing with academic calendars could strengthen the impact of the program. These adjustments would help students gain the technical skills and confidence needed to succeed in their professional paths.

"I was offered a job that was not in my field. The idea was that after the lectures, we would enter our own professions, because that is the purpose of the program. But it was an administrative job that was not in my field. It was at the Prishtina Airport, an administrative job that was offered to all the girls." - (Faculty of Civil Engineering, 22, final year)

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Networking Events with Successful Women



Networking events within GEG serve as moments of inspiration, connection, and growth. These gatherings help students build confidence, overcome hesitation, and learn from the experiences of women who have navigated and challenged barriers in engineering and beyond. Although scheduling conflicts with university classes occasionally limit participation, those who attend describe the events as enriching and motivating.

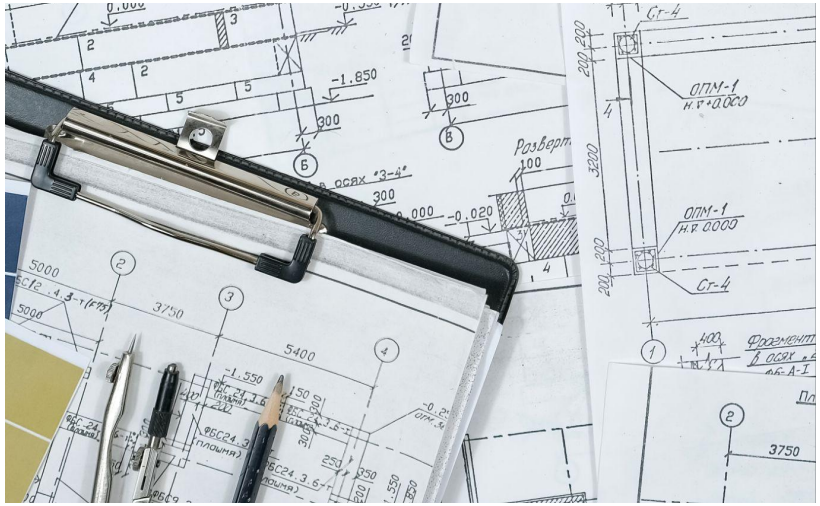
Stories shared during these sessions, particularly those involving resistance from families or communities, reinforce the idea that pursuing engineering does not require abandoning other passions. These examples expand students' understanding of what is possible and affirm that women can lead, innovate, and contribute meaningfully within the profession.

At the same time, some challenges remain. Language barriers during international events, particularly in Istanbul, reduce access to technical content and limit full participation. Within the participant group, opportunities for deeper networking and knowledge-sharing are sometimes missed, as attention shifts toward travel logistics rather than long-term relationship-building.

"I had the chance to build a network. There were girls from different cities, and we are still in touch with most of them." -(Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 24, graduate)

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Certified Programs: What Students Experienced



Participants generally respond positively to the certification and soft skills programs offered through the Global Engineer Girls initiative. Sessions focused on soft skills, such as CV writing, interview preparation, and time management, are especially appreciated for their practical utility and immediate applicability in academic and early professional settings.

Certification programs that address industry-relevant standards, particularly those involving ISO standards, are seen as valuable tools for understanding the expectations and regulatory frameworks of engineering workplaces. Additionally, the mentor from Türkiye receives specific praise for being approachable and responsive, offering continued guidance beyond scheduled sessions. Many students feel that the training sessions contribute meaningfully to their awareness of industry standards and leave them better prepared for future employment opportunities.

"I think choosing courses ourselves would be a better idea, with more focus on hard skills. Of course, the soft skills were good too, but there should be a better balance. It also depends on your field, but when hard skills were offered, they were very specific. I think it would be good if we could choose which ones to take and have course groups, or maybe even vote on which courses to include. As far as I know, the courses were pre-selected." -(Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 24, graduate)

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Certified Programs: What Students Experienced Cont'd



Despite the strengths of the program, several areas for improvement emerge from student feedback. Some participants find the soft skills sessions to be repetitive, particularly for those who have already encountered similar material in previous workshops or academic settings. A more balanced integration of both technical and soft skills content is recommended to ensure that students across all stages of familiarity remain engaged. There is also a strong desire for more customizable training paths, allowing students to select modules that align with their specific interests and career aspirations.

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Certified Programs: What Students Experienced Cont'd



Language barriers pose a significant challenge in some certification sessions, especially when content is generalized or presented in a manner that does not consider the variety of engineering disciplines represented in the group. Participants note that the absence of engineering-specific translators sometimes results in the miscommunication of technical terms, leading to confusion or reduced clarity. To enhance the effectiveness of the training, several students recommend offering more in-person opportunities, which would support hands-on learning and practical demonstrations that online platforms often fail to replicate.

Additionally, while the mentor from Türkiye is appreciated, her expertise in a single engineering domain is seen as limiting for students from other branches. Expanding the pool of mentors to include diverse engineering specializations could increase the relevance and impact of future programming.

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Imagining a World Without GEG



When asked to imagine if GEG were to disappear, participants describe a deep sense of loss, particularly for young women in Kosovo. They see GEG as filling a critical gap, providing opportunities, encouragement, and practical support in a society where women often lack access to targeted engineering pathways. The absence of GEG is described as leaving a visible emptiness, like a missing support system, and participants express concern for future generations of girls who might lose this chance to learn, connect, and grow within engineering.

"I would consider it an even bigger loss for those who haven't started at all. I've benefited, but maybe it's not enough. If the program were to stop, I'd see it as a loss for those still hoping to join GEG. If, for example, the mentorship stopped now, you'd feel the absence of the guidance and support that someone could have provided." -(Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering, 20, final year)

06

Evaluating The Impact Of Global Engineer Girls On Social Life



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Subtle but Lasting: GEG's Everyday Impact



For many participants, Global Engineer Girls has a quiet but meaningful impact on their social lives, extending beyond school and classes. They describe how GEG helps increase their self-confidence, confirms their chosen career paths in engineering, and affirms that they are where they need to be. Witnessing the success of other girls within GEG is a source of motivation, reinforcing participants' commitment to their ambitions while encouraging them to learn from and share knowledge with others. This sense of belonging within a network of ambitious women provides reassurance and motivation to continue pursuing engineering, even during moments of doubt or disconnect from their field.

Furthermore, participants note changes in their daily lives before and after joining GEG. While the structure of university and work remains the same, many describe a subtle shift in mindset: they become more curious, start exploring topics related to diversity and inclusion, and begin to see engineering as a broader, more interconnected field than they initially imagine. For some, this means reading more about topics such as diversity in STEM, while for others, it means seeking out opportunities to share their experiences and potentially mentor others, seeing this as a way to give back to the community that supports them.

"From my perspective, it was very inspiring and motivating. The staff there were very welcoming and kind. Apart from the issue I mentioned about the job, everything else went well." - (Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering, 20, final year)

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Building Connections and Collaboration

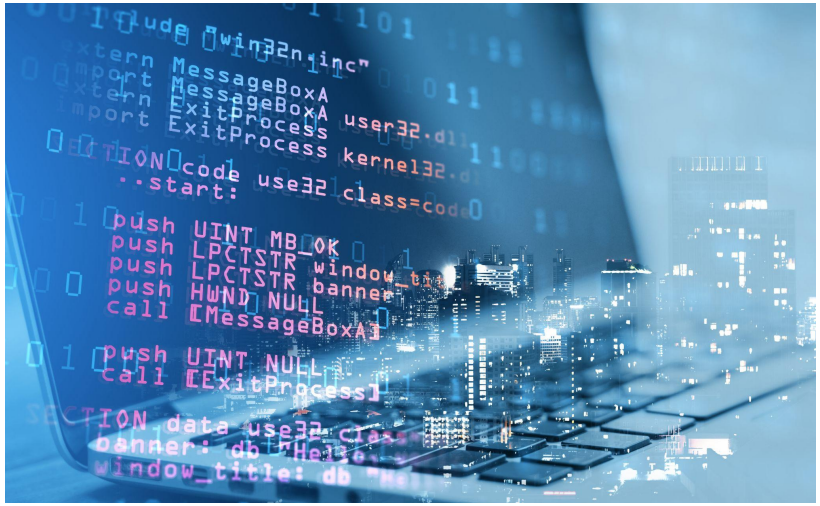


Participation in GEG facilitates stronger collaboration and sharing with other students, especially through group activities such as environmental clean-up days and study visits. These activities help transform classmates into a support network, providing a space where young women can share ideas and experiences beyond academic topics. Participants note that GEG makes it easier to approach others during university activities, as shared participation in GEG creates an instant connection.

For some, these connections do not always translate into deep, ongoing friendships but still offer a sense of community during shared activities and study trips. The ability to participate in discussions with peers about engineering and beyond expands their social circles in a meaningful, though sometimes limited way.

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Impact on Technological Perspectives



For many participants, GEG enriches their understanding of technology, broadening their perspective on the field. Through workshops, discussions, and exposure to peers' diverse interests, they learn that technology is expansive and touches many parts of society, not just the narrow areas they initially associate with their studies. For some, training in software such as AutoCAD, ArchiCAD, or GIS adds practical skills that increase their confidence as future engineers. Others share that seeing technology in real-world settings, like during internships or study visits, makes engineering feel more relevant and tangible.

However, a few participants mention that GEG does not significantly change their views on technology, particularly for those who are already highly engaged in similar programs or who do not feel the content aligns closely with their interests..

"The program did not impact my perspective on technology that much because I had already received training on soft skills, like writing CVs and using digital procedures, before joining the program."
(Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 22, master 2nd year)

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Broader Horizons Through the Program



While some participants describe GEG as transformative, others report a more limited personal impact, noting that while GEG facilitates networking and social activities, it does not significantly change their professional outlook or interests. For them, the most meaningful aspect is the social connection, feeling part of a like-minded group, and gaining small but valuable additions to their CVs, which increase their confidence during job applications.

Overall, participants emphasize that GEG plays a unique role in supporting young women in engineering, even if the scale of its impact varies across individuals. The presence of GEG in their lives creates opportunities to engage with others, to see success stories within their reach, and to view themselves as part of a larger movement supporting women in engineering.

07

Conclusions & Recommendations



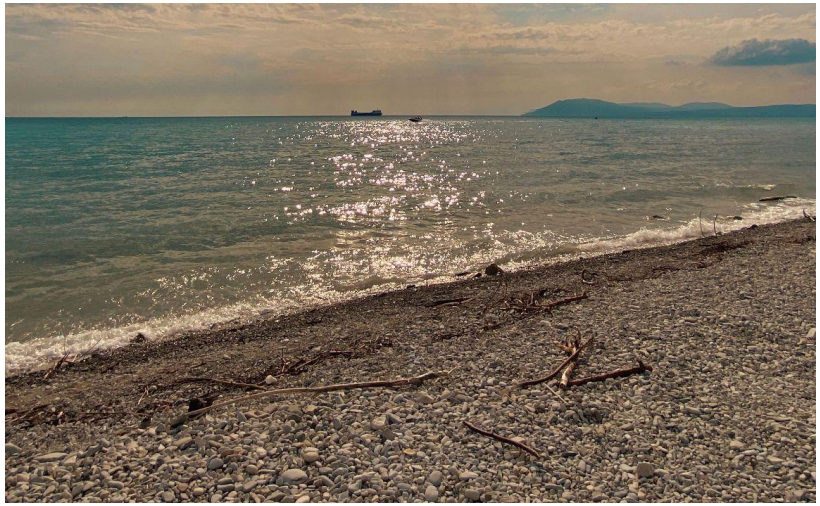
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Global Engineer Girls Is A Life-Changing Experience



Participation in GEG is helping many young women gain clearer direction in their academic and professional journeys. The program acts as a “push” that strengthens commitment to engineering, especially during moments of doubt. While many already have an interest in engineering, GEG confirms these interests and makes a technical career feel more realistic. Through mentorship, internships, and site visits, they begin to see how theory connects to practice.

Some initially view GEG as just extra training, but over time, they recognize its unique value in providing practical exposure, community, and motivation. One participant says that before GEG, she saw her degree only as a route to programming, but now feels confident exploring engineering roles, knowing that skills can be developed with practice. GEG also reduces feelings of isolation, creating a sense of belonging in a male-dominated field.

“I think the program served as a push for me. It also helped me understand the importance of motivating others and how you can encourage someone else. The site visits helped me as well, both emotionally and in the way I think.” - (Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 21, master 1st year)

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Making GEG More Impactful The Path Forward- I



Students suggest improvement the GEG program
Key suggestions include:

- **Align internship placements with students' specific engineering disciplines** to ensure relevance and maximize learning outcomes.
- **Increase the number of girls admitted to the program** to expand access and inclusion.
- **Place greater emphasis on technology-related fields**, such as computer engineering, to reflect student interest and demand.
- **Organize more on-site visits to real-world environments**, such as construction sites, factories, and engineering offices, to give students direct exposure to how things are built and operated.
- **Create dedicated socialization days with no formal tasks**, such as picnics or casual outings, focused solely on peer bonding and community building.
- **Expand activities and improve access to job placement support**, especially in fields like construction engineering, where female students often struggle to find opportunities.

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Making GEG More Impactful The Path Forward- II



- **Provide more technical activities and field-specific site visits**, helping students gain a clear understanding of how their profession operates in practice.
- **Establish a physical GEG office or hub in Kosovo**, or at least a regular meeting space, where girls can gather informally, study, or socialize.
- **Offer access to a dedicated in-house psychologist**, recognizing the importance of mental health, self-esteem, and emotional support for young women in engineering.
- **Ensure all training sessions are delivered in Albanian or include a translated option**, since language can limit participation for some students.
- **Coordinate training topics with students' fields of study**, particularly for those in computer and construction engineering, to ensure the content aligns with their academic and career goals.

"I think GEG should have its own office or a space where girls can socialize. I also suggest having an in-house psychologist, as this could help us overcome self-doubt and become the best version of ourselves, making mentorship even more effective."
(Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 24, graduate)

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Closing Statement



GEG has shown that when young women are given space to learn, connect, and believe in their potential, they carry that confidence into their studies, careers, and communities. These stories remind us that empowering women in engineering is not just about skills. It is about creating environments where they feel seen, capable, and inspired to lead. This is the quiet, lasting change GEG is making, one young woman at a time.

THANK YOU!

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