

Training 13 Million African Women with DataCamp

How a Nigerian social venture for women integrated world-class education into their curriculum.



Gitgirl is a data science academy for women headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria, founded in 2018. Their mission is to train 13 million African women to become data-fluent. As of November 2019, they've trained over 150 women, and they're just getting started.

Seventy-five percent of Gitgirl's trainees have master's degrees or PhDs ranging in fields as diverse as statistics, computer science, and law. At a minimum, all Gitgirl trainees have at least a bachelor's degree and a strong desire to work in tech.

Gitgirl is building a training program tailored to African women

Gitgirl took a practical approach to build out their learning program. Their first consideration was location: Lagos is one of Africa's largest cities and their cohort has been mostly in Lagos, although they do have students from other parts of Nigeria. Second, traffic in Lagos is notoriously bad, especially during rush hour, so expecting their cohort to travel frequently for in-person sessions wasn't reasonable. They knew that they needed an online program.

Their six-month program trains students using instructor-led webinars with a Q&A component. Gitgirl uses a Slack group to give assignments and facilitate discussions, and provides optional monthly in-person meetups in Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria. These meetups provide a safe space for learners to come together in an all-female co-working space, ask questions to instructors, meet other learners, and conduct a study group session over wine.



A community yoga session to promote holistic wellness among Gitgirl students

Gitgirl begins its training program with a focus on spreadsheets to help its cohort build a strong data foundation. But some of their learners are more advanced and desire deeper training. DataCamp's curriculum works well for both beginners developing foundational skills like spreadsheets, and for more advanced learners.

Choosing DataCamp as their online learning partner

Many of Gitgirl's students are looking to gain data science skills to obtain better-paying jobs, but getting started in a brand new field can be intimidating. So they specifically looked for a provider with a seamless onboarding experience that could guide novices on the right path. DataCamp was the perfect fit—we help learners explore different aspects of data science, try out different languages, and enroll in skill and career tracks with curated learning content.

With DataCamp, students can also learn on their own terms and don't have to conform to a rigid schedule. This was key because many of Gitgirl's students have full-time jobs and other obligations outside of work, so they needed flexibility. DataCamp's mobile app is a useful supplement since connectivity in Nigeria is often better on mobile than on the Internet.

Another important consideration was cost: The average professional salary in Nigeria is about \$300 a month, so Gitgirl's average learner couldn't afford to set aside many funds. DataCamp has, in turn, donated 35 licenses to support our shared mission to spread data fluency across the world.

“We use DataCamp content that aligns with our curriculum. All links to the DataCamp courses are embedded in our platform to ensure students have direct access to the courses. Their content is always up-to-date, which ensures our students are learning the most valuable skills for the future of work.”

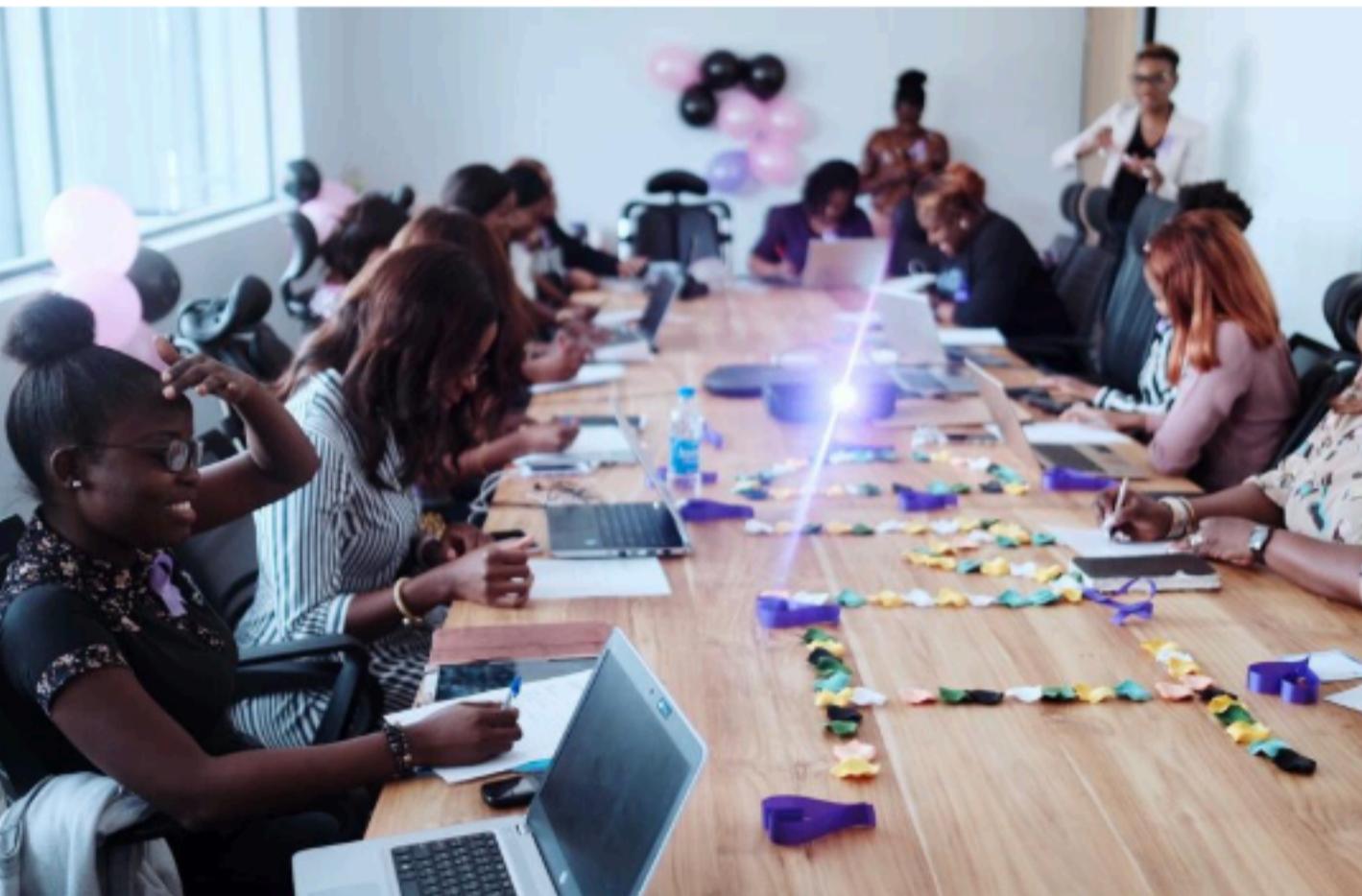
EMEKA, LEAD INSTRUCTOR

“With DataCamp, if students didn't know what aspect of data science to study or what language, they wouldn't have to choose that up front. They could be guided onto the right path.”

EYITEMI POPO, HEAD OF PARTNERSHIPS

Charting the path to data fluency

Over 150 students have participated in Gitgirl's program, but not all of them decide to pursue data science professionally—some are bringing data skills into their respective industries. Thirty-five of their advanced learners have moved beyond spreadsheets and progressed to advanced topics like data modeling and data visualization in Python and R. This is where DataCamp's curriculum has had the strongest impact.



Gitgirl training session at a local company in honor of International Women's Day 2019

“We wanted to provide world-class standard education for our students and the ability to give our students confidence in that. Of course, given that we're a startup in Nigeria, we help students learn with local datasets. But at the same time, we want to make sure the foundational skills they're getting in data science are on par with world standards. By integrating DataCamp in our curriculum, we're ensuring that.”

EYITEMI POPO, HEAD OF PARTNERSHIPS