Paper Airplanes (PA) is a nonprofit organization registered in the USA that matches conflict-affected individuals with personal tutor sessions conducted via video-conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Google meets, etc. We have two programs formed in response to student demand.

Our mission is to bridge gaps in language, higher education, and professional skills training for conflict-affected individuals. By harnessing virtual learning technology and the benefits of peer-to-peer connections, we seek to provide a means of pursuing educational and employment opportunities.

WOMEN IN TECH (WIT)

Training future programmers, one woman at a time.

More than 50% of jobs require computer training in today’s global economy. As industries move towards digitization, we want to empower all women, especially marginalized women, and give them access to jobs in the programmer market.

Nearly 1 in 4 Syrian refugee women are heads of households, which means that they need to raise children as natural caretakers while also providing for their families. Accessing employment in conflict areas and job skills training can be expensive or difficult to reach, particularly for young children. Over 80% of Syrian refugees live outside camps, which compounds the difficulty of getting women to provide skills training, leaving few options.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Apply
   We open up the application to participants via social media for women in conflict-affected areas.

2. Select
   We select women ages 18-35 who speak at least intermediate level English and have an interest in coding. Selection is determined based on student goals and resource access.

3. Create
   The students engage in a 10-14 week course where they learn how to code and develop solutions to various problems. At the end of the course, students use the problem-solving and programming skills they have developed to complete a final project, where they showcase what they have learned to potential employers.

4. Expand
   Women in Tech links each student to additional training and professional programs opportunities to further grow their skills. After graduating from the program, alumni are encouraged to attend our workshops and competitions.

COURSES OFFERED

01. Business Analytics
   We currently offer beginner and intermediate classes taught in Excel and R. Students learn how to perform regression analysis on large data sets to solve diverse problems using analytical tools.

02. Web Development
   In Web Development, students learn how to combine CSS, Javascript, and HTML to build interactive websites.

03. Python
   Our Python programming course teaches students the fundamentals of Python Programming. Students learn how to apply these skills to industry concepts, such as machine learning and web scraping.
The impact is assessed at the end of each semester. These data reflect the impact of the 2021 calendar year. Spring 2022 semester impact data will be published in June.

In 2021, Women in Tech had 127 students from 11 countries across the Middle East, Africa, and Europe.

More than two thirds of students graduate from their course—significantly higher than the sector MOOC average of 40%.

Similar online courses in technology have a completion rate of 40% or less. Through Women in Tech’s multi-tiered support system, we can maintain a completion rate of 60-70% each semester:

**Weekly Check-In:** Students and volunteers fill in a weekly check-in form to note their progress, issues, and curriculum feedback. Staff follow up on any issues within three days. Staff are also available daily to resolve any urgent matters.

**Office Hours:** Instructors host office weekly online office hours where students can drop in to receive additional help with the course.

**Coffee Chats:** Staff host regular coffee chats with students to get their course feedback and discuss progress towards their professional goals.

When we asked our students to rate their satisfaction with the program, here is what they said:

- **Overall Satisfaction:** 92%
- **PA Team Support:** 94%
- **Positive Addition to CV:** 100%
- **Comfortable Using Course Skills:** 92%

Paper Airplanes prioritizes education for conflict-affected individuals. 70% of 2021 Women in Tech students were either internally displaced or refugees.
Buthaina Zeneddine  
Business Analytics 1 Student

"When I presented for the first time, I found it very challenging, but Leslie, the Program Coordinator, helped me overcome my fears during the mock presentation day and gave me worthy feedback on my project. I enjoyed the semester, but the presentation skills workshop was my favourite activity with the program. I also enjoyed working as a team, and individually, I managed to communicate well with my classmates. I could also rely on myself, and it wasn't too difficult as I've been practising all semester."

Yara Almansour  
Business Analytics 1 Mentor

"I have been a student with WiT since 2020, and now I am a mentor for their Business Analytics 1 course. My experience with WiT was fruitful and exciting. I have learned a lot about Business Analytics and improved my conversational English and communication skills. In addition to meeting great people, instructors, and mentors. As a mentor, I feel satisfied because I’m helping other people in their learning journey and paying back previous help I received."

Online Library: A Web Development student created a website where users can surf different literature categories to find summaries of books.

World Bank’s Women, Business and the Law project: Business Analytics students created a database that included Women, Business and the Law (WBL) data for 190 economies. Data was provided across eight scored indicators. Excel was used to filter and order data, apply some functions, and visualize the results.

Gender Disparity in the Workforce: A Business Analytics student used Excel to create visuals from datasets. The student demonstrated how there are now more women in computer-related jobs.

COVID-19 Vaccination Rate: A Business Analytics student studied the effects of COVID-19 vaccination on school closures and death rates around the world using linear regression. The student found an association between increased vaccine uptake and a lower death rate.
We extend our gratitude to the following groups and individuals who made this program possible for 2021:

Institutional Donors & Partners

Karam Foundation
Expedia Group
Collateral Repair Project
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo
American University of Beirut
Skoll Foundation

Recurring Donors

Mike Sobaski
Angela Sobaski
Sarah Randall
Syed Kaiser

Since Paper Airplanes programming is fully online and we do not operate from an office, our most important resource to our student and teaching network is the staff who support them. 95% of all donations go directly towards providing this support. The remaining 5% is allocated towards services that maintain our legal and financial compliance and website hosting.

Because we minimize administrative costs, our cost per student for one semester is just $160.

We proudly offer all programming 100% free of charge to our students.

Interested in studying or volunteering with Women in Tech?

Visit our homepage at paper-airplanes.org and register your interest in participating in the Fall 2022 semester.

Paper Airplanes partners with like-minded NGOs, language and skills providers, and academic institutions to maximize our student and volunteer success.

If your organization shares this mission and you would like to work together, please contact: partnerships@paper-airplanes.org
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WOMEN IN TECH TEAM

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