

《Increasing opportunities for girls to pursue STEM》

Sunday marks the United Nations International Day of the Girl. Now in its fourth year, the day recognizes the rights and challenges girls face globally. To coincide with this day, a so-called 'hackathon' is taking place in Ireland with the aim of encouraging more girls to pursue computer science.

At 13 years old, Niamh is part of a new generation of girl coders in Ireland-influencing her peers to get involved in computer programming -- an industry traditionally dominated by boys. She learned to code at the tender age of 9, and has since developed an app called "RechargeMyECar"-that identifies all the live charging points for electric cars in Ireland.

"Over the years people see coding and computer science for boys. Do you think events like this change perceptions," asked the correspondent Lourda Sexton.

"Now loads of girls are hearing about it more, and now people are saying come try this and more girls are getting interested," said Niamh Scanlon, coder.

Like many countries globally, Ireland has relatively few girls studying the STEM subjects of science, technology, engineering and math.

"We've discovered that it's a multifaceted problem. So one has to intervene in many ways. For example parents are a huge influencer in terms of looking for careers for their children, for their daughters," said Brian maccraith, president of Dublin City University.

One company that is trying to change this is CoderDojo, a global movement of free coding clubs for young people. Founded in Ireland less than five years ago, the movement is now in 57 countries. This event is one of the many so-called "hackathons" they run -- hoping to encourage and inspire young girls to start coding.

"What we've seen is a huge increase in girls attending our Dojo and it's been great. Coderdojo now around the world are really working on getting 50/50 ratio as that's what we want," said Niambh Scullion, co-founder of Coderdojo Girls.

Proof that initiatives like this can work is Catriona, who created a piano game at the age of 15. Her work is now part of UK school curriculum.

"With events like this I've seen technology as quite cool and there are actually jobs in it in Ireland which is an amazing thing and it's an area I'm happy to go into," said Catriona Carrigan, coder.

She's not alone, judging by the participation in this event. Girls of all ages are learning they have the skill and potential - to compete with any boy.