

Microsoft, NGO aim to attract young women in HK to IT

o Computerworld Hong Kong staff

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The two organizations will encourage and help young women to develop leadership skills, explore the ICT industry, build robust peer networks, and achieve career success through workshops, sharing sessions, and hands-on project experiences, Microsoft said.

"Microsoft sees the potential of young women as society's business and technology leaders of tomorrow," said Horace Chow, general manager, Microsoft Hong Kong. "GirlSpark--a project under our global YouthSpark initiative that focuses on empowering youth through tech training, internship, and placement--showcases a concerted and tripartite effort by industry, leaders across different sectors and non-government organizations for grooming young talent."

The two organizations already held a three-day camp in early January where 51 GirlSpark participants--local final-year or penultimate-year students majoring in various areas--joined experience-sharing sessions by leaders from different sectors including government officials, Legco councilors, representatives from universities and business schools, senior executives from large corporations and NGOs, successful entrepreneurs, and ICT industry experts, Microsoft noted.

The firm added that GirlSpark will provide guidance and mentorship to help drive the success of nascent female talent in Hong Kong through:

- an in-depth understanding of career options and future opportunities in the ICT industry;
- working in teams to find a practical solution to a technology-based business case study, developed by the Ivey Business School;
- close encounters with outstanding leaders in the community;
- an opportunity to network with fellow aspiring woman leaders; and
- a chance to join Microsoft as a summer intern and receive a certificate of completion in recognition of their outstanding achievements.

A GirlSpark participant and HKU student Emy Chan Hoi Ying said : "I wasn't sure if the male-dominated ICT field would suit me. But the camp showed me that women do have a place in the leadership of the ICT sector. I now consider joining the [ICT] industry after graduation as a serious career path."