

Employee Spotlight: Supporting girls in technology – an interview with Mounika Bugude





At IndiVillage, in partnership with U.S.-based NGO Girls Who Code, we currently run coding clubs for 50 girls out of our

centers in Yemmiganur and Raichur. Meeting for a couple hours each week, girls are exposed to a rigorous computer science curriculum as well as sisterhood activities focused on building confidence and exposure to successful women in the IT field. As we look ahead to expanding the program to nearly 500 girls in the coming academic year, we sat down with Mounika Bugude, one of the lead facilitators of the program, to discuss her experience and learnings.





Tell us a little about yourself.

I'm Mounika, I work as a front-end developer on the development team. I've been working for 1.5 years at IndiVillage – ever since my graduation. This is my first job. I really love what I am working on – I wanted to work in this industry but never thought I'd be working on what I dreamt of: developing and designing the websites.

How did you learn about Girls Who Code?

A couple months ago I heard from my manager that we were going to start a Girls Who Code club based out of our office in Yemmiganur. I soon learned that we were going to be teaching young girls coding and life-skills. As a developer myself, I was really excited about the opportunity to share my passion with others.

Why did you decide to get involved?

I love coding and I thought 'Why don't we teach others, so they start to love coding and explore more?' I have also recently wanted to explore myself in teaching and get better at interacting with students. Being a GWC facilitator is a great opportunity to do both of those things.

What has your experience been?

It has been a great experience so far. Since starting as a facilitator with GWC, I have spent a lot of time self-reflecting. I've had to think about what I'm good at and what I still need to improve so that I can work on myself and be a better teacher for these students. The students are also making great progress in the classes.

Tell us about how the girls that you teach are progressing.

I interact with about 30 girls in the week, 15 per batch. For the first few classes, many students are not ready to ask

questions, not ready to do summary activities in the standup sessions. But now, after a number of sessions everyone is daring enough to ask questions, like “madam I have a question in this topic, can you please explain/ repeat this topic?” They’re now also good at summarizing things that they’ve learned in class.





Mounika instructing the girls at a club meeting in Yemmiganur

Why do you think it is important for girls to participate in Girls Who Code?

The first reason is that they gain strong technical knowledge. If they want to choose computer science as their career, it will be very easy because they have previous knowledge. Another reason is that we're not just teaching technical things to the girls – here we are teaching them how they will be in society. They gain confidence and real-life skills.

How do you think this will affect their lives?

In addition to technical learning, we will help the girls with how to plan their futures. They can incorporate this planning for the future in their current studies. For example, when we are about to start a project in class, we won't directly dive into the project. First, we will plan the project. We will gather the requirements and think of a way to structure the project to avoid any obstacles. If students ever have any trouble doing the projects, they know to ask someone who can help. They also learn to think of some different, creative ways to solve problems. Whenever I ask the students if they are finding GWC helpful they tell me that, "we are speeding up in our school curriculum" and that everything they learn is helpful in many different ways.

What were the parents' reactions to their daughters joining GWC?

They are proud that their children are learning something special.

Any final thoughts?

I feel really thankful to have the opportunity to work with GWC because teaching the students has also helped me grow. Through facilitating the clubs, I have come to know that I am

a good speaker and I can motivate children to do new things.