

MEDIA RELEASE**SheConnects Digital Accelerator to advance women's digital inclusion in India and Sub Saharan Africa**

- In India, the SheConnects Digital Accelerator will be supported by Reliance Foundation and Gates Foundation.
- SheConnects Digital Accelerator will also promote knowledge sharing in India and Sub-Saharan Africa.
- The INR 200-crore initiative will scale high-impact solutions over the next three years. The Accelerator includes grants to scale high-impact evidence-backed solutions for women's digital inclusion in India and Sub Saharan Africa

Mumbai / Delhi, 6th May 2026: A new initiative to strengthen and accelerate women's digital inclusion – the SheConnects Digital Accelerator, was announced today by Reliance Foundation and the Gates Foundation. The Accelerator aims to improve lives and livelihoods of women and girls through adoption of proven, high-impact digital solutions. Over the next three years, the INR 200 Crore initiative will provide an important Global South platform to support locally led innovations that advance women's digital inclusion. In India, the SheConnects Digital Accelerator will be supported by Reliance Foundation and will identify and scale high-impact evidence-backed solutions. Working together with Gates Foundation, the Accelerator will also help to promote South-South knowledge sharing, especially between India and Sub Saharan Africa.

Over the last decade, India and Sub-Saharan Africa have made significant progress in enabling digital access, participation and opportunities for women. The SheConnects Digital Accelerator aims to further advance solutions that are helping to reduce the gender digital divide through a three-pronged approach: i) scaling evidence-backed solutions through grants or awards and/or technical advisory support; ii) promoting South-South learning and collaboration among awardees; and iii) supporting the ecosystem to adopt practices that work.

“Empowering women with the tools and confidence to participate fully in the digital world is essential to a more equitable future. When empowered women are at the centre, they have shown that they drive more than their own journey and catalyse transformation in society. In India, Reliance Foundation will support the SheConnects Digital Accelerator to scale up solutions to close the gender digital divide, and enhance women's agency. Over the next three years, as we identify and support efforts to advance digital inclusion for women in India, we look forward to sharing innovations and learnings from India with the Global South,” said **Ms N Deepthi Reddy, Chief – Women Empowerment, Reliance Foundation.**

“Across the Global South, women continue to face systemic barriers to accessing and benefiting from digital technologies. Countries like India and several African nations have made considerable strides in advancing digital inclusion, creating important momentum and lessons for broader adaptation. The SheConnects Digital Accelerator is an opportunity to support locally led innovations that address these challenges in contextually relevant ways. By fostering collaboration and learning across regions, we hope to accelerate progress toward a more inclusive digital future for women,” said **Ms Saachi Bhalla, Deputy Director – Gender Equality, Gates Foundation.**

The SheConnects Digital Accelerator in India builds on Reliance Foundation's long-standing commitment to women's inclusion and towards digital empowerment, since 2010. Over the past three years alone, Reliance Foundation has fostered innovative culturally rooted solutions that have improved access to digital technologies for over 600,000 women across India.

Across Africa and India, Gates Foundation, in partnership with the government, has supported efforts to expand digital public infrastructure, strengthen digital ecosystems, and enable women's access to financial services, health information, and livelihood opportunities through digital platforms. Its work emphasizes closing gender gaps in access, affordability, digital skills, and safety, while partnering with governments, non-profits, and the private sector to scale inclusive and sustainable solutions.

By advancing digital adoption for women, the SheConnects Digital Accelerator aims to contribute significantly to the global goal of halving the digital gender gap by 2030, as declared by G20 Leaders during India's presidency in 2023, for a more inclusive and prosperous future for all.

About the SheConnects Digital Accelerator

The SheConnects Digital Accelerator was founded by the Reliance Foundation and Gates Foundation to advance women's digital inclusion. The Accelerator aims to scale proven, high-impact solutions that enable women and girls to participate fully in the digital world, improving their lives and livelihoods. The Accelerator grants are supported by Reliance Foundation in India and by Gates Foundation in Sub Saharan Africa. By catalysing innovative partnerships and use cases, the Accelerator will strengthen evidence on what works, foster south-to-south learning, and help shape a more inclusive global digital ecosystem.

About Reliance Foundation

Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing India's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Smt. Nita M Ambani, Founder and Chairperson, Reliance Foundation is relentlessly working for the overall well-being and enhanced quality of life for all, focusing on rural transformation, education, health, sports for development, disaster management, women empowerment, urban renewal and arts, culture and heritage, and has touched the lives of over 97 million people across India, in over 91,500 villages and urban locations. More on www.reliancefoundation.org.

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About Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health with vaccines and other life-saving tools and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to significantly improve education so that all young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Mark Suzman and Chair Bill Gates.