

Cognizant Foundation Awards Grants to Three London-based Organisations to Advance Education and Economic Mobility in the UK

Investments will provide underrepresented groups with digital skills training and career opportunities

LONDON, July 15, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Today the [Cognizant Foundation](#) announced grants totaling more than £440,000 (\$611,000 USD) to [Code First Girls](#), [The Prince's Trust](#) and [Social Mobility Foundation](#)—three leading organisations working to provide underserved and underrepresented groups in the UK with digital skills training and computer science education; mentorship and access to social capital; and opportunities to achieve economic and social mobility.

We are proud to partner with these organisations as we work to ensure equitable access to tech careers in the UK.

These grants mark the foundation's first investments in the UK as part of Cognizant's [continued commitment](#) to advance economic mobility and educational opportunity in communities around the world.

"While advances in technology have created unparalleled opportunities for many, far too few have access to the quality education, training and job opportunities required to improve their social mobility in a changing landscape," said Kristen Titus, executive director of the Cognizant Foundation. "We're proud to partner with these three organisations as we expand our grantmaking efforts into the UK—together, we will ensure equitable access to tech careers and advance our efforts in new global markets."

The tech sector in the UK has seen [40% growth over the past two years](#), and to avoid a talent shortage as tech companies continue to grow their workforces, all individuals must have access to [relevant digital skills training](#) and reskilling opportunities.

"We believe that the tech industry can serve as an engine to unlock economic opportunity, but that won't happen unless we create more equitable career pathways into the field," said Ursula Morgenstern, president of global growth markets at Cognizant and Cognizant Foundation board member. "That is why the foundation's initial partnerships in the UK are with Code First Girls, The Prince's Trust and Social Mobility Foundation—all working to provide historically excluded and underrepresented groups with access to critical skills and career opportunities."

Training young women for tech careers

[Code First Girls](#) promotes women's participation in the tech sector by offering free and paid training courses for students and working women. Through its partnership with the foundation, Code First Girls will provide more than 1,600 women with access to online courses, in-depth classes and nanodegrees in high-demand tech fields, while receiving wraparound supports such as mentoring, career prep and portfolio development.

"This partnership with the Cognizant Foundation will enable Code First Girls to provide life-changing upskilling and job opportunities to hundreds of women across the UK and around the world, connecting them with rewarding careers in technology to change the talent landscape. Code First Girls is committed to giving women the fair advantage, and this investment from Cognizant Foundation supports us in the drive towards our goal of teaching 40,000 women to code by the end of 2021," said Anna Brailsford, CEO at Code First Girls.

Equipping underrepresented groups with digital skills and job experience

Together, Cognizant Foundation, [WYK Digital](#) and [The Prince's Trust](#) will deliver three 11-week training programmes for 150 young people aged 18-30 in London, giving them the confidence, knowledge and practical experience to launch a career in digital marketing. At the end of the course, teams will design and present a live marketing campaign for a real client, a Prince's Trust supported start-up business, using real budgets.

With additional support from a mental health nurse, confidence coach and The Prince's Trust's youth support workers, this partnership will raise young people's aspirations, while developing vital technical and employability skills. It will provide participants with the skills and confidence they need to secure a digital marketing job, therefore helping to open up and diversify the industry.

"Cognizant Foundation shares our passion for helping young people to realise their potential. This partnership will create lots of crucial opportunities for young people—boosting their confidence and skills, raising their

aspirations and supporting them into employment within the digital marketing sector. Collaborations like this are vital in helping young people to get a foot onto the careers ladder at this difficult time, while also enabling employers across the UK to build a diverse and talented workforce," said Jonathan Townsend, UK Chief Executive of The Prince's Trust.

Expanding social mobility and convening conversations

[Social Mobility Foundation \(SMF\)](#) works with young people from across the UK in the years prior to and during university. With funding from the foundation, SMF will scope, develop and pilot targeted support for 50 talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds who aspire to careers in technology. This pilot programme will include mentoring and coaching from tech industry professionals; events and workshops on tech career pathways and key skills; and tailored support with applications and interviews. Through this partnership, Cognizant Foundation will partner with the SMF's advocacy and campaigning arm, the [Department for Opportunities](#), to co-convene a series of events in 2022 focused on social mobility and equitable pathways into tech.

"The tech sector has a huge challenge when it comes to socioeconomic diversity and so we are delighted to partner with Cognizant Foundation to build support for disadvantaged young people aspiring to technology careers. Alongside the programme, we will be working together to raise awareness and mobilise action for social mobility in the industry. We're honoured to be one of the foundation's first UK grantees and we can't wait to get started," said Sarah Atkinson, CEO at Social Mobility Foundation.

About the Cognizant Foundation

The Cognizant Foundation works to inspire, educate and prepare people of all ages to succeed in the workforce of today and tomorrow. Since its founding in 2018, the foundation has invested more than \$50 million to support organizations working to ensure all communities are prepared for the jobs driving the future. Learn more at www.cognizantusfoundation.org.

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For further information: Kyle Gunnels, Head of Communications, Cognizant Foundation,
kyle@cognizantusfoundation.org

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